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Edward W. Staples.

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Your friend  
Joseph Hammyton



S E R M O N S,

BY

✓  
REV. JOSEPH HARRINGTON,

OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

WITH

A M E M O I R,

BY WILLIAM WHITING.

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MEMOIR.



## PREFACE.

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THE following brief Memoir of my friend and classmate has been written, at the request of his relatives, in the chance intervals of time snatched from engrossing professional labors. If it fails to do justice to his sterling worth, it may yet be accepted as a sincere tribute of affection and respect.

W. W.





## MEMOIR.

---

JOSEPH HARRINGTON, JUNIOR, was born in Roxbury, Massachusetts, on the 21st day of February, A. D. 1813. His father was a lawyer, who practised his profession many years in Norfolk and Suffolk Counties, and occasionally held court as a justice of the peace. His mother still resides at Roxbury, the survivor of her husband and eldest son, whose life is the subject of this brief narrative.

The years of childhood are not unfrequently passed over as unworthy of notice. It is true that they are usually wanting in striking incidents; but those are not the only ones to be deemed important which excite the imagination, arouse the feelings, or seem to have been followed by obvious results.

The genuine history of childhood is purely psychological. Its true object is to reveal the earliest tendencies of the mind, — to lay open the head-springs and rivulets from which the stream took origin; and the successive contributions from verdant meadow, shady grove, or rocky cliff which united to form the mingled tide of life.

Whence, and under what circumstances, the youth received those successive impressions which have moulded the character, — how the world would have been changed to him had his early tendencies, or the influences acting upon him, been different from what they really were, — what were the laws of his spiritual being established thus early, and how they transmitted, reflected, or distorted the rays cast upon it by the phenomena of life, — these inquiries, and such as these, in relation to any human soul, would not be without interest.

Yet, however curious or valuable they might prove, as affording the means of ascertaining by early observation the elements of the true orbit of the mind's progress, such elements are rarely noticed, and genuine data are seldom preserved. General recollection and vague impressions alone remain of facts seen through the misty medium of intervening years, and these are often colored by the sentiments of a too friendly observer.

This is not the only difficulty in the way of ascertaining the precise truth. When an individual, even of tenacious memory, and prone to retrospection, attempts to regain a clear and definite recollection of what he himself was in early childhood, he will find that he has undertaken no easy task. He will be pained to learn that he cannot feel completely certain as to the phases of his own moral or mental constitution through its various successive changes. Some leading facts may, indeed, have established themselves in his memory; but all else that made up the scenery of early life has sunk irrecoverably into uncertainty and forgetfulness.

If the philosophic mind finds such difficulty in tracing the vestiges of its own early experience, it is worse than useless for the stranger to attempt it.

It is to be regretted that so little is now known of the early life of the subject of this Memoir. He is remembered as a bright, active boy, who engaged ardently in childish sports, feared nobody, and always stood up for the weaker side. Resolute and determined, he was always ready to maintain his own rights whenever he considered them assailed, either by overbearing schoolmates or by the village mistress herself; appealing to no one for aid in such emergencies. Upon one occasion, while at school, as early as his sixth year, it was thought proper to inflict some punishment upon him to insure obedience, but when the schoolmistress was about to apply the ferrule, our active and athletic pupil seized the instrument which he thought destined to disgrace him, and threw it in fragments on the floor. The teacher yielded, and the boy triumphed for the time, but came the next day with a humble apology, insisted on by his parents, who were perhaps roused by this incident to that deep anxiety and watchfulness which became the means of developing in his mind much that afterwards ennobled his life.

But there were other elements of character which were strongly marked, even at this early period. Of these, one was a genuine and enthusiastic love and reverence for his mother: it was more than affection; it was profounder than respect; it was not mere obedience, which may be enforced by a sense of

duty, — it was an elemental law of his nature; it was the native loyalty of the heart to its true sovereign. Such hold, fortunately, had his mother upon the destiny of her son; she alone could have controlled the wild and stormy elements that were pent up in this boy's breast.

The first law of manhood is obedience; it is the foundation of self-control, and is the only element by which allegiance to the sovereignty of conscience is recognized and enforced; obedience first to the earthly parent, then, as the soul becomes cognizant of its relations to God, obedience to his will. Obedience, not from fear, not from compulsion, but from filial love, was one of the beautiful laws that, from his earliest years, was planted in the mental constitution of this brave child; thus making a strong contrast with the resolute and turbulent will, which it was destined in future years to control and subdue.

On one occasion only, and this when he was seven years old, his mother thought it necessary to reinforce her influence by inflicting corporal punishment. With emotions which her tears plainly revealed, she gave herself up to this twofold sacrifice; the noble heart of this her oldest son was melted; he was overcome by the suffering of his mother, and throwing his arms about her neck, he made a promise, which he always kept, that she should never again have occasion to punish him for disobedience.

An incident of his boyhood is related which illustrates his determination to be faithful to this prom-

ise. When about twelve years of age, he was spending a holiday in various amusements with his schoolmates, and was invited by them to jump into a pleasure-boat which lay moored to the shore. After some time they unfastened the boat, and were pushing off, when Joseph perceived their intention. He at once requested the boys to set him on shore, and when they refused, he replied that he must go on shore; that he had promised his mother never to go out in a boat without her leave; that he had on new clothes, and should be sorry to spoil them; but that, unless they would put back, he would jump overboard and swim ashore. The boys yielded, and he landed alone, having indeed lost the company of his playmates, but having gained self-respect and the satisfaction of doing his duty and keeping his pledge.

Among the instructors whose influence upon him seems to have been most permanent was Edward Bliss Emerson, a man of great purity and simplicity of character, uniting exquisite delicacy and sensitiveness with an earnest, religious purpose, sterling common sense, and a wide and generous sympathy for all.

Elegant and graceful in manners and address, rich in the stores of classic learning as well as of polite literature, graced with every quality that could fascinate youth, or command the love, respect, and admiration of manhood, Mr. Emerson exercised an irresistible influence over every one with whom he was intimately associated.

Mr. Harrington often, in after years, mentioned

with reverence and gratitude the name of this faithful instructor, who so early passed away, the first stricken from that brilliant constellation of men of genius bearing his name.

With good health, constant attendance upon the excellent public schools of his native place, and in the bosom of a home made attractive and joyous by a numerous family of brothers and sisters, who grew up in mutual affection for each other, the young scholar passed the first fourteen years of his life.

In September, 1827, he entered Phillips Academy at Exeter, New Hampshire, at that time under the charge of "Dr. Benjamin Abbot and Dr. Gideon Soule, whose names strike many a hallowed chord of association in the past, and who are remembered with gratitude by a long line of illustrious pupils." The Rev. A. A. Livermore of Cincinnati, a fellow-student at Exeter and a classmate at Cambridge, thus writes of his first appearance at the Academy:—

"I well remember his fair, open face, his light hair, and affable manners. He was a specimen of a healthy, genuine, fine-spirited New England boy. My impression is clear, that, if one word were used to describe him then, that word would be *magnanimity*. His mind was a good one, but his strength lay in his heart and character. He would not allow meanness in plays, or tyranny of the strong over the weak. His clear, blue eye would flash rebuke at any unworthy compliances, and his manly voice would ring out an indignant condemnation. He was active and athletic, excelled in manly sports, and did with might and

main whatever he undertook, whether it was to get a lesson, catch a fish, or win the game. He was a good scholar ; but his nature did not run up in any brilliant eccentricities or specialties which mankind commonly call genius. His genius was rotund, complete, equal to every occasion. Physically, mentally, morally, he was a high-toned, healthy human creature, and he carried this wholesome equipoise through life. He could do all things well, and maintained, both at the academy and in college, high rank as a scholar. His moral conduct and deportment were unexceptionable, and his heart poured out a constant tide of good feeling. As a friend, he was always true, frank, and sincere, and he entered with warmth and heartiness into all the school-boy confidences and ardent sympathies of youth."

Few incidents are recorded which would give point and distinctness to those delineations of his school days. That he was thoroughly prepared for college is well known, and that preparation could have been obtained only by constant application to his studies.

He entered Harvard University in the summer of 1829. That day on which the name of the young student is recorded upon the rolls of the University should be remembered as one of the most important eras in his life. He has thus abandoned the busy mart, the stirring scenes of commercial enterprise, the excitement of politics, the hope of wealth, and has consecrated himself to the pursuit of learning. He has exchanged the noisy and rattling pavement for the shady walk ; the dusty race-course for the "academic grove" ; the rough struggles of actual business for the intellectual contests of Greek

philosophers; the stock-list and price-current for Thucydides and Xenophon and the ponderous tomes of the schoolmen.

That the young and ambitious scholar, withdrawn from the immediate care of his parents, thrown into fortuitous association with many young men of his own age, beginning, as it were, a new life, breathing a new atmosphere, and burdened with new duties and trials, surrounded with novel pleasures and temptations, should be insensible to these changes could not be expected or desired.

That college life is encompassed with danger and temptation cannot be denied. There, alone, the youth is exposed to all the seductions of vice, while its deformity is veiled by the refinements of taste or disguised by sophistry. The hand of apparent friendship too often raises to the lips the honeyed but poisoned cup, and the unguarded conscience is too often betrayed into fatal error by the sneer of the libertine or the example of the open-hearted worshipper of Bacchus. The student who is above such unworthy influences may yet be in daily intimacy with those who have entered the university merely because it affords an elegant and fashionable mode of spending four precious years, — young men of no fixed principles upon any subject, thoughtless, indolent spendthrifts, who have no taste for knowledge and little capacity for acquiring it; who pride themselves upon their wealth or family, and expect that the wide world will be anxious to do them reverence when they shall be ready to receive it; scorning the ambitious student, who, rather than to waste the



midnight hours with jolly companions in idle dissipation, prefers to spend them in communing with the master-spirits of ancient times, and in treasuring up their immortal thoughts.

Then there is the danger of a too high-wrought ambition, that may lead to a miserable wreck of health and happiness. The rivalry of youth, not less intense than that of riper years, may lead the heart far away from the pure and serene atmosphere in which alone the tree of knowledge puts forth its branches and bears its fruit. College life, like the hot-bed, compels every seed either to rot or to germinate, and each plant must be developed according to the law of its own constitution. It will select of the various species of nourishment offered to it that which is congenial to its organization; the rest it will reject as poison. The law of its vitality will instantly decide what it shall absorb and what it shall refuse, and the result will disclose to us what that law was.

Thus life in college develops each student's pure individuality, and the young scholar from Exeter was no exception to the rule. He had attained knowledge enough of the preparatory studies to pass a critical examination for admission to the Freshman class.

Endowed by nature with a strong and healthy physical constitution, his active habits had tended to strengthen and improve it. He enjoyed the exhilaration of out-of-door air and exercise, and was accustomed, at frequent intervals, to walk a dozen miles or more in the day, without sensible fatigue. Dur-

ing vacations, he sometimes took long journeys on foot, with one or more of his classmates. He learned the arts of boxing and fencing, not only for the vigorous and healthful exercise which they require, but for the purpose of self-defence. His eye was quick, his judgment cool, his dexterity unusual, and his skill added not a little to that fearlessness or bravery which marked his personal bearing. He feared no man in single combat, armed only with nature's weapons. High-spirited, and quick to notice insult, he bore it from no one, unless followed by explanation or apology. Entertaining a high sense of honor himself, he could not tamely submit to a taunt more than to a blow. He was among the foremost in all the games of the "Delta," and his broad chest and well-developed form gave to his figure, though but little above the medium height, a certain solidity and dignity which corresponded with the manliness of his character. Yet, in all these athletic sports, even in the exciting broadsword exercise, he was always fair, courteous, and good-tempered, and he never forgot what was due to his adversary, whether victorious or not.

Full of good-humor at all times, and delighting in whatever gave pleasure to others, he was fond of daring frolics; and not a few of those wild pranks which sometimes annoyed the college tutors, and procured for his classmates "a miss" from recitation, were supposed to have been shrewdly planned and adroitly executed by this light-hearted youth; but he never destroyed a sixpence' worth of property, or intentionally wounded the feelings of a single member of the government of the University.

Perhaps it could not justly be said that he loved study over much; his vivacity of temperament, vigorous health, fondness for athletic exercise, and other peculiarities of taste and temper, were all against his becoming a recluse or a bookworm. Yet he conscientiously devoted his time to the college course of studies, always mastered his lessons, and held, as a scholar, an honorable position among his classmates. He was not inclined, at that time, to the study of abstract science; and the more recondite branches of mathematics, and metaphysics were pursued by him chiefly as means of mental discipline.

But he was a philologist; he delighted in the English classic poets. Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, and Shakspeare were the objects of his genuine and unaffected admiration. The Italian, French, and German languages were also studied by him with more interest than the ancient tongues, although there was less opportunity then than at present for attaining a thorough knowledge of them at the University.

The Italian first attracted him, because it was the language of music,—he had not then become familiar with the wild, harrowing pictures of the “*Inferno*,” the seductive stories of the “*Decamerone*,” the Christian chivalry of the “*Jerusalemme Liberata*,” or the touching sonnets of the poet of Vacluse.

But the literature of Germany early took a deeper hold on his imagination; and as he became more acquainted with the genius of the language, its radical affinity to the English, of which it forms so large

an element, its richness, vigor, and flexibility, its capability of being moulded to suit most opposite characteristics, and, above all, with the freshness, depth, variety, and independence of thought which are embodied in it and constitute its chief glory, he determined to master all its treasures.

As long as he lived, he never abandoned the learning or the literature of Germany, enjoying not only Goethe, Schiller, and the minor poets, but studying with ever-increasing interest the works of those great theologians who, by vigorous research, and faithful investigation, have rendered such valuable aid to the profession which he afterwards chose.

Music was a source of daily delight to him; his organization was delicate, his ear accurate, his voice agreeable, and of good compass. Many a time in summer he wakened the midnight air with his gay carols, and often the silent and sombre walls of the old college buildings echoed back the trios and quartettes to which his voice added much of their grace and sweetness.

The college laws forbade the student to be present at the opera and theatre, but the laws of his constitution rendered these attractions irresistible, and as the tutors and professors themselves occasionally visited these places of amusement, he could see no valid reason why he should be driven from the shrine of the muses. But it was not mere amusement that he sought; he was passionately fond of music; every note melted into his heart, and the memory of fine passages was a perpetual joy to him. He practised the more remarkable parts of every

opera which he heard, and became sufficiently familiar with them, not only to understand them, but to appreciate the difficulty of every "cadence."

His appetite for the science became more intense as he better understood it, and his pleasure increased as his acquaintance extended from the well-known compositions of Rossini, Bellini, &c. to composers of a widely different order of genius.

The drama, both comic and tragic, was from his early youth a favorite source of amusement and instruction. The fine readings of the Kembles made a strong impression on his mind; every new point brought out by these great tragedians was remembered, marked down in his copy of Shakspeare, and not unfrequently repeated to his intimate friends, with much satisfaction. He was accustomed to study, and was perfectly familiar with the plays, not only of Shakspeare, but of Ben Jonson, and of most of the old English dramatic writers, and these were the fountains whence flowed that rich and pure language which seemed natural to him in later years. His fondness for dramatic performances did not cease till the more serious duties of life shut the door against such entertainments.

The study of elocution, then for the first time in the University made a special branch of education, engrossed much of his attention. Indeed, it was at that time a subject of general interest among the students, and not a few of the most distinguished scholars, in the different classes, entered into a generous rivalry with each other, in the practice of public speaking or declamation. A learned professor of

elocution laid down rules for training and exercising the voice so as to develop its full capacities, and gave in his own performances admirable illustrations of all that could be done by the orator, drilled and disciplined according to the rules of art. He taught his pupils that mere declamation, however elegant, graceful, or perfect in its intonations, has no power to excite the imagination or to touch the heart; that it is only when the speaker forgets himself, and is carried away by glowing thoughts, genuine sentiment, and uncontrollable enthusiasm, that his words are really eloquent and effective.

Young Harrington studied elocution as an art, and in his Junior year carried off one of the Boylston prizes for declamation, proving the high estimation in which his powers as an elocutionist were then held, and although no one could exceed him in the euphony of his manly voice, in the musical rhythm of his cadences, the propriety of his intonations, or in the ease and gracefulness of his gestures, yet his elocution fell short of that effect which it attained in after years, when he spoke unconsciously, from a full heart, and on subjects of momentous interest.

This practice of declamation, united as it was to a genuine fondness for dramatic compositions, gave him great advantages in the pursuits to which he was afterwards devoted, as a teacher of youth, and a preacher of the Gospel.

He was at one time much interested in the study of phrenology, of which Dr. Spurzheim was then an eminent advocate, and whose instructions were attentively listened to by many students of his class;

but neither for this nor for any other pursuit did he ever neglect his college duties, but was an exemplary student, and faithful to every lesson. His high sense of moral obligation; the consciousness that his future all hung upon the present; his dread of disappointing the just expectations of his parents, who had made great sacrifices to give him a liberal education; his personal ambition; and, above all, his love and respect for his mother, — conspired to add vigor to his manly resolves, that no duty should be left undone, and that neither music, the drama, the “Delta,” nor his love of wild adventure, should baffle his efforts to follow the straight path of laborious study. His occasional letters show the difficulties he encountered and the success he attained. The strength of a man’s virtue is known only by the power of the temptations he has vanquished; and that character is truly noble which obeys the imperious dictates of duty when it is opposed to the tastes, habits, and passions.

Few young men have passed through the fiery ordeal of college life with less cause for regret than he. His life was pure in every sense of the word. He was never guilty of profanity in earnest or in jest, and one who was his friend for more than twenty years, and who was, during all his college life, in the habit of daily unrestrained intercourse with him, and to whom, at all times, he poured out his heart as to a brother, cannot recall a single instance of coarse language, thought, or allusion uttered or suggested by him.

At that period of life when the thoughtless are too

apt to lay up for themselves a store of self-reproach, — the season of hot and impetuous blood, — his instinctive delicacy shrank in disgust from gross wickedness, and his high sense of honor repelled the idea of tampering with female innocence.

Yet he was a romantic youth ; his soul was filled with dreams of poetic beauty ; he paid profound homage to all that was graceful and lovely in man or woman ; and he not only worshipped the ideal and visionary, but was in truth an enthusiastic admirer of the actual. He was ready to bend the knee at the shrine of beauty, not senseless, insipid, and unmeaning beauty, but that higher and nobler quality which commands the admiration and respect of refined and sensible men.

This fact sometimes subjected him to censure for inconstancy. Yet the pure, chivalrous, and manly sentiments which he entertained towards all females formed one of the secret charms that shielded him from the thought of dishonorable trifling.

Accustomed to good society, he was scrupulously neat and unostentatious in his dress, and he was graceful and self-possessed in manners. If in early youth he had any tendency to display, it wore off when the earnest work of life began, and simplicity of heart and unconsciousness of self, indispensable conditions of saying or doing any worthy thing, were, in later years, the prominent features of his mind.

He was a sincere and truthful man ; he made no timid concessions or compromises, but stoutly defended his principles when they were assailed, and



in him the absent friend was sure to find a fearless and independent champion, whenever the occasion called for one. Though he loved to please others, he was no time-server, but a brave, self-relying, generous fellow, and had withal that further quality which lies at the basis of manly virtue, *decision of character*. He was resolute, but not obstinate; firm, decided, steadfast; he did not sit down satisfied merely because he had come to a conclusion, but he acted upon his determination. He had confidence in his own judgment, a strenuous will, energy and courage to bear and to execute.

Such were the striking outlines of his character when he left the University, understood as they then were by a few only of his intimate friends, but to them as palpable and clearly marked as were the features of his fine and beaming face.

Mr. Harrington was graduated in the summer of 1833, and received the usual degree of Bachelor of Arts. He was thenceforward to depend on his own resources, and not only to maintain himself, but to lend a helping hand to the younger members of the family. While in college, he practised rigid economy, for a long time giving up the use of meat, and living simply on bread and milk; and he contributed something to lighten the burden of his expenses by keeping school at Walpole. Shortly before the end of his last term, having obtained leave of the President, he went to East Greenwich, Rhode Island, where he became principal of the academy. While teaching there, he wrote the part which he delivered at the time of his graduation. After residing a little more

than six months at East Greenwich, he took charge of the Hawes School at South Boston, January 14th, 1834.

This was at that time reputed to be one of the most difficult of the Boston schools to manage, and held the lowest rank of them all. Some of its pupils were spoken of as "turbulent, refractory, and profane; and the young man, not yet of age, who dared to undertake its charge, was looked upon with curiosity and surprise by all." The spirit in which Mr. Harrington undertook this new office, the powers he brought to bear upon the hearts of his pupils, his success as a teacher of youth, the gradual bending of his energies to the great office of developing the religious and intellectual nature of those over whom he had influence, are well known to all who took interest in that school.

He was the founder of an association in South Boston, which still lives in full vigor, devoted to the literary, moral, and religious culture of its members, and their feelings towards him were expressed, upon receiving the news of his decease, in a series of resolutions which show how deep was the good impression his life and teachings had made upon the character and morals of the young men of that place.

"Whereas, recent intelligence from California has brought to us the sad tidings of the death of the Rev. Joseph Harrington, — one who had gone forth in obedience to the injunction, "Go, teach all nations"; and who has died with the Gospel armor on, in the active discharge of conscientious duty to the eternal interests of his fellow-man: And whereas, the deceased has sustained the very im-

portant relation of instructor to many of the members of this Association, and has been instrumental in making a deep impress for good upon the characters and morals of the young men of this place, —

“ *Resolved*, That by this allotment of Providence we stand as mourners at a father’s grave; for in the wisdom of his counsels, in his assiduous care of our youthful minds, in his anxiety to make pure and noble impressions upon the yielding tablets of our forming characters, in his constant labors to mould us to manly and virtuous life, we have lost all of a father’s wisdom, care, and devotion.

“ *Resolved*, That we will, with warm interest, cherish those wise instructions, those noble principles, those disinterested labors for others’ good, that faithfulness to ourselves and to every duty which it was his labor and desire ever to inculcate in us; and that, with all that is pure and good in our hearts, we will embalm his memory, as the only tribute to his manly talents and goodness of heart which is left us in this hour of affliction.

“ *Resolved*, That we deeply sympathize with his afflicted family in this dispensation, knowing how great must be the loss of one so friendly, so devoted, and so faithful in every relation of life; and we trust that the blessed consolations of the Gospel which he preached, in which he lived, and in which he died, may be ministered to them, in all its healing richness and power.

“ *Resolved*, That these resolutions be entered upon the records of this Association; and that a copy, signed by the presiding and recording officers, be forwarded to the family of the deceased.

“ BENJAMIN POPE, *President*.  
BARNARD CAPEN, *Secretary*.”

Mr. Harrington's success as a teacher at the Hawes School was remarkable. His own generous heart, his fearlessness, his resolution and decision, his gentleness and good-humor, his absolute truthfulness and sincerity, the commanding qualities of his mind, his clear intellect, his love of justice, and his excellent scholarship, all combined to render him the man for such a place.

To deal with wild and turbulent boys, who have never felt the restraint of discipline, requires a fearless teacher; to repress profanity demands the presence, not of the timid, but of the brave and heroic man, who bows in reverence before God; to eradicate falsehood, there is need of magnanimous truthfulness to put it to shame. The bud of promise is unfolded only under the crystal lens of a pure and tender heart, that concentrates upon it the warmth of a thousand scattered rays of light and love.

That such apparently inconsistent qualities should be embodied in one individual is not to be often expected, but they were so combined in him, that each held its due influence in his well-balanced mind. One who was intimately acquainted with the Hawes School thus writes:—

“His insight into human nature was so keen, that it was often remarked by children themselves, ‘Nobody can tell a lie to Mr. Harrington.’”

“While he required perfect order in his school, he made every effort to relieve the tedium, by means of frequent change of position, and by music, teaching singing himself to his pupils. He also abolished the use of corporal punishment for girls, believing that by it their delicacy was

outraged, and thus the standard of responsibility was lowered. In introducing all these novelties into his school, he was regarded by some as an enthusiast and innovator, but the efficacy of these plans has been shown by their general adoption.

“ At the close of five years he gave up his school to prosecute more closely his theological studies, leaving it among the first in the city.

“ He lived to be fully repaid for all his unwearied exertions, and his anxious toil in this scene of his labors, by witnessing the worth, respectability, and usefulness of his pupils, as men and women, and by often receiving from one and another letters of undiminished affection and interest. While in Boston, a short time before his death, he met one of his first pupils, and congratulated him upon his success in life. His reply was, ‘ Mr. Harrington, all that I am I owe to you. Do you recollect when I was a reckless boy, and you had tried all common means to make me attend to my duties, you at last said to me, “ If your dear mother, who loved you so much, can see your conduct now, do you not think it will grieve her spirit ? ” Then you touched the right chord, and from that hour I determined to become an altered being.’ ”

It was while in this field of arduous labor at South Boston that Mr. Harrington began to turn his attention towards the ministry. Nor was it an unnatural transition from the education of youth to the teaching of men. Any instructor who feels the responsibility and delight of unfolding to ingenuous youth the elements of moral and religious truth, who observes how readily the frank-hearted child receives impressions, and who thus perceives that his own errors are repeated by many of his pupils, his faults

daguerreotyped in their book of life, never to be wholly obliterated, can with difficulty avoid thorough and frequent self-examination. When that work is once begun, it will be prosecuted, not only from a sense of duty to himself, but from a just apprehension that the pure and trusting hearts of innocent children might otherwise be touched and soiled by the presence of some unhallowed thought emanating from their instructor.

Having once tasted that supreme felicity which flows from manly and successful efforts to exalt and ennoble any human soul, what wonder that he should feel that the path of duty and happiness lay in the same direction. It is but a short step from the genuine instruction of youth to the preaching of the Gospel to all. The progress of Mr. Harrington's mind towards this end was observed by many of his friends, and among them a distinguished Baptist clergyman, who was at that time most intimate with him, and who watched his career with almost parental interest, thus wrote of him, after his decease.

“ MRS. HARRINGTON : —

“ Deeply do I sympathize with you in the bereavement you have sustained by the recent death of your beloved husband. I have been acquainted with him for many years, and only to cherish toward him increasing respect and love. My acquaintance with him commenced at South Boston, while he was yet a young man, perhaps unknown to yourself. He had just succeeded to the mastership of the Hawes School; and as I was then settled in that part of the city, and had taken a house near to his school, he applied for board in my family.

I had no intention of keeping boarders, and, besides, felt a little prejudiced against the new master for having succeeded against my old friend Forbes, who was a rival candidate for the vacancy. But young Harrington appeared so frank and open, so intelligent and affable, and withal spoke so kindly of his unsuccessful rival, that my scruples were readily overcome, and in accordance with his request, he became a member of my family. He celebrated the twenty-first anniversary of his birth at my house, his parents, brothers, and sisters being present on the occasion. The characteristic joyousness which then beamed upon his features is still fresh in my memory. The morning of life dawned brightly upon him, and, alas! his sun has gone down while it was yet day. The many pleasant social interviews which I enjoyed with him while under my roof deepened the favorable impressions I had formed of him, and resulted in the permanent and uninterrupted friendship which has since existed between us. He was not only a scholar, and "a ripe and good one," enthusiastic in his profession as a teacher, but I soon found that his heart was set upon something higher than mere intellectual training, and that he had a growing desire for a profession in which he might devote himself more exclusively to the development of moral and religious truth. I endeavored to encourage and strengthen these aspirations. I had confidence in his Christian character. Though differing from him on some points of theology, I believed, and that belief has been confirmed by his subsequent history, that his ministry would be occupied more in setting forth the spirit and life of piety, than in dry speculations and unprofitable controversy. He had a keen relish for religious truth, no matter from whose lips it came, and seemed to feed upon it as upon the bread which cometh down from heaven. It has not surprised me to learn, that, in the various places where he has preached, he has been

known more as a Christian minister than as the advocate of denominational peculiarities. Nor am I surprised to learn that, in his last moments, when far from the home of his childhood, whither he had gone to carry the good news of salvation, and to furnish seasonably to the young, the adventurous, and the tempted the safeguards of our holy faith, — I am not surprised to be informed that, falling, as he did, with his harness on, in the midst of his benevolent and religious enterprise, he was sustained and cheered by the presence of God and the hope of a blessed immortality. I sincerely grieve at his death. He was in the maturity of his strength, full of life and hope. I can scarcely realize even now that he is gone, that those lips are sealed and that speaking eye closed for ever. Nay, my dear madam, we are not compelled thus to think of our departed friend. He is not dead, but hath ascended to a purer and a higher life, where, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may hope, amid brighter scenes, to renew the acquaintance and the friendships of earth.

“When intelligence reached me of your husband’s death, I immediately wrote a letter of condolence to his afflicted father, but in the evening paper of the same day saw a notice that he, too, had gone, and was thus spared the necessity of human sympathy, which would have been but an inadequate relief under his crushing bereavement.

“Accept, Mrs. Harrington, these spontaneous reminiscences as a token of affectionate regard to the memory of your departed husband, with my earnest prayer that Heaven’s choicest blessings may rest upon you and the fatherless child.

“Your sincere friend,

“ROLLIN H. NEALE.

“Boston, August 1st, 1853.”

Always prudent in his personal expenditures, Mr. Harrington was ever ready to spend his money



for the benefit of others. He devoted a large portion of his salary at the Hawes School to liberal efforts in assisting in business some of the younger members of the family; and, moreover, by this praiseworthy generosity, incurred obligations which, though small in amount, required for their ultimate liquidation no less than fourteen years of heroic self-denial and untiring industry in labors outside of his professional duties. Only a few months before his death, he had the satisfaction of paying principal and interest, to the last farthing.

“It was while engaged in teaching,” writes one who knew him well, “that his mind revolved the serious question of his future profession. His previous inclination had been for the law, and he had gone through considerable preparatory study; but the ministry now claimed his solemn attention. The various worldly sacrifices of the latter were duly weighed. He seriously put to himself the question, whether he could relinquish all the gayeties of life, into which he had hitherto entered with much enjoyment. This and all kindred questions were long the subject of earnest and prayerful consideration. Believing that he could serve God in one honest walk of life as well as in another, he strove to know *His* will in his decision. The impulse to devote himself to his holy calling came, as he devoutly believed, from on high. He was standing, during morning prayer in his school-room, with closed eyes, leading the devotional exercise, when his doubt and questioning vanished, and his duty seemed to be clearly opened to him. With him, to know his duty was to form

his purpose, and to give himself entirely to the fulfilment of it. So in the case in question; from that moment he was a minister of Jesus Christ."

In a letter to his mother, written on an anniversary of this day of signal experience, he writes thus: "*This day, three years ago, my mind received that bias which it has since retained, and which I hope it may ever retain, — about 9.20 A. M. on Tuesday preceding Thanksgiving, 1836. The resolve was, I will be a public teacher of morals and religion.*"

It has been before observed, that Mr. Harrington was destined to the practice of the law, a profession to which his powers were well adapted, and in which, doubtless, he would have acquired distinction. Much of his previous education had tended in that direction, and the law was well suited to his ambitious nature, opening a field for exercising the highest and noblest powers of the mind, and, when pursued with high and honorable aims, calculated, not less than the clerical profession, to elevate the morals, to enlarge the mind, and store it with science, literature, and all that adorns the life and character of a high-toned Christian gentleman. He did not forsake the study of jurisprudence because he undervalued its dignity, or because he thought that the life of a religious teacher was less beset with temptation, or less likely to lead him astray, than that of a student of law. As a lawyer, he would have been no less upright and conscientious than as a clergyman; nor would he have tolerated the miserable cant which pronounces one person pious merely because he dons the surplice, or another

less virtuous because he ministers at the altar of justice.

He was well aware that the lawyer is brought into close contact with the naked heart of men. Their undisguised passions are laid open; no sanctimonious pretensions veil their real designs or their genuine characters, as, with passions roused to action, excited by great temptation or maddened by real or fancied injury, they pour their tale of wrong into the ears of their legal "confessor." Then the lawyer has his mission to perform, also, as a "teacher of morals and religion." He has many a golden opportunity to make an impression on the character of a client which time cannot efface. By a word or look, the majesty of a noble Christian character may be revealed, the unworthy impulse, the unhallowed intention stand rebuked, and be perhaps for ever crushed.

Fully appreciating the advantages of the legal profession, Mr. Harrington, after mature deliberation, felt himself called by duty to the ministry; and having thus made his choice, he entered upon the study of theology under the direction of Rev. George Putnam of Roxbury, continuing his school, however, at the same time, until the last year of his theological course.

In the autumn of 1839, he was sent by the American Unitarian Association, as missionary, to Chicago, Illinois, where he remained until the following April. At that time he returned to New England to solicit funds for the purpose of building a church. By his individual exertions he raised about \$2,500;

and the further sum of about \$ 2,000 being contributed by citizens of Chicago, the enterprise was carried to a successful issue; and before he finally withdrew from that place, his society was left free from debt. In September, 1840, he was ordained as an evangelist at Federal Street Church, Boston, the sermon on that occasion being preached by Rev. Dr. Putnam. In October of the same year he returned to Chicago, as pastor of the "First Unitarian Society" of that city, having on his way a hair-breadth escape from shipwreck. He reached Chicago on Saturday, the last day of October, and preached his first sermon as a settled clergyman on the following Sunday. There he first met Miss Helen E. Griswold, to whom he was married on the 6th of April, 1841. Their eldest, and only surviving child, Helen Josephine, was born in February, 1842, the two sons who were afterwards born to them having both died in infancy.

His labors were not confined to his own pulpit. In the summer of 1841 he was the first to preach the doctrines of Unitarianism at Milwaukie, Wisconsin. A large audience attended the services, and from that beginning sprang the present church at that place.

He received, in 1842, a call to become colleague with the Rev. Mr. Eliot of St. Louis.

At Rockford, Illinois, he planted the Unitarian church in 1843, where he passed some time, preaching three times on each Sunday, and almost every evening in the week. Six months after his departure, a friend visiting that place found the highest en-

thusiasm prevailing among the people, of all denominations, in regard to his power and eloquence as a preacher.

In the spring of 1844, Mr. and Mrs. Harrington left Chicago to visit their Southern and Eastern friends, and on the journey he preached for several Sundays, most acceptably, to the congregation of the Unitarian church in Baltimore (Rev. Dr. Burnap's). It was during this visit that he formed the determination to resign the charge of his parish at Chicago. This movement had been a subject of deep consideration with him for a long time, and the motives inducing him to take this step are stated in the following letter to Edward K. Rogers, Esq.

"Roxbury, June 21st, 1844.

"MY DEAR ROGERS :—

"After long deliberation, and great anxiety, I have come to the resolution, which I have sat down to communicate to you. This resolution is, to transfer my duties from the West to some place in the vicinity of my own home.

"The primary, moving inducement to this step is the precarious state of my mother's health, united to a condition of family affairs which make my presence here a matter of great importance, if not of absolute necessity.

"My mother is now considerably better than she has been, and is rapidly improving. She ascribes her restoration to her mental tranquillity, which tranquillity she believes to be dependent upon the companionship, sympathy, and counsel and support of her children.

"For anything that I now know to the contrary, my removal from Chicago will not conduce to my worldly profit. I have no place in view where I may be established. There

are two desirable vacancies in the neighborhood, but whether or not it will be my fortune to fill either of them, — whether my ministerial services will be desired or not in either place, is more than I can even conjecture.

“ I need not say to you, that it is with great pain that I determine upon leaving you ; — not that I was ever perfectly contented and happy in Chicago ; but because I feel a profound interest in the wellbeing of the church there ; — because that place has been the scene of some active, anxious labors on my part, and because a fair share of success has crowned my work, and a growing and substantial religious brotherhood is rising up to reward solicitude and toil. I regret, moreover, to leave the society at this time, because it is a period of critical interest in the Chicago church.

“ But it may all be well that I should leave you, — it may be for your advantage that I abandon my Western field of labor. Some of you, I feel assured, will mourn my departure, others will be indifferent, — a few may make it matter of congratulation. If ministers of our faith were plenty, and were willing to establish themselves in those remote fields of toil, I should have no reason to despond for you, — for I should feel that another incumbent might do you much greater service than I could. But our ministers are few, and those who would be effectual among you will, I fear, be reluctant to cultivate so remote a vineyard. We will not, however, despair of excellent things to come.

“ In respect to my own experiences among you I wish to speak with perfect candor. I said I had not been perfectly happy in Chicago, — many things made me a little uncomfortable, — but the chief difficulty lay in my own breast, — I never could fix the *home feeling* there, — and this destitution was fatal to my perfect content. I could not look upon myself as other than a sojourner there, — I

could not bear to buy a lot in the cemetery, because I was reluctant to entertain the thought that that distant territory was to be my perpetual abode, that remote soil the resting-place for my bones.

“Why did I feel so? I can hardly say. As much as anything, the *mode of my settlement* among you contributed to this feeling. I was *voted in*, as it were, from year to year. *Uncertainty of connection* was written on the very contract of alliance. You felt not permanently connected with me. I never felt the real sentiment of an abiding pastoral relation. The terms of our union bore the stamp of the uncertain, changeful spirit of the time and of the region and of the community. And it may be that this is the better way. I never objected to it, am not sure that I did not advise it, that it was as much or more the *result* of the want of the home feeling of which I have spoken as the *producer* of it.

“The *mode of raising the salary* stamped uncertainty on all things. This was voluntarily subscribed. It made me feel sadly my dependence. It seemed to place me on the ground of perpetually receiving favors. It gave me no security, no stability of position, and matters connected with this voluntary contribution often occurred that affected me painfully. There was then some uncertainty attending the grants from the East, and, all together, obstructed a lodgment of the home feeling in my heart. I have, my dear Rogers, spoken out with frankness, and with a sad and tender sentiment toward you all. I know that you will welcome this candor. I shall return in three or four weeks, shall remain in Chicago four, five, or six weeks, as circumstances may direct, and then bid you farewell. . . . .

“With affection,

“JOS. HARRINGTON.”

That Mr. Harrington was loved and respected by those most intimate with him at Chicago, that he was faithful and untiring in his efforts for the prosperity of his society, that he made sacrifices of personal comfort for their sake, that he labored in season and out of season, that he succeeded in laying the foundation of a permanent society in that thriving place, where Unitarianism was little known, and yet exceedingly unpopular, that he built up his society and relieved it from a debt which came near overwhelming it, that he did not fail to awaken that deep and growing interest in religion, which alone could satisfy a mind and heart like his, are facts too plainly appearing, in all the correspondence between him and his parish, to admit of a question.

When, in 1840, his first term of service was drawing to a close, the following, among other resolutions, were passed:—

“Whereas, the term of service of the Rev. Joseph Harrington, Jr. as pastor of this society is about to expire, in view of which he has expressed his intention to depart from this place: And whereas he has for the space of nearly six months discharged his ministerial duties to the entire satisfaction of every member of the society: Therefore,

“*Resolved*, That the contemplated departure of the Rev. Mr. Harrington excites in us the most unfeigned regret, and that we feel called upon to express our gratitude for his valuable services, our sorrow of the prospect of parting with him, and our cordial wishes for his future welfare.

“*Resolved*, That while the ministerial labors of the Rev. Mr. Harrington have essentially strengthened the cause of Liberal Christianity in this city, and gone far to build up



and promote the objects of this society, his social character has justly endeared him to all who know him, without regard to sect or denomination, but more especially to the members of this religious society.

“ *Resolved*, That the Rev. Joseph Harrington, Jr. be, and he is hereby, called to the permanent pastoral charge of the First Unitarian Society of Chicago, and that we earnestly solicit his acceptance of this call.”

On his return from the East, after his successful mission on behalf of his society, the following resolutions were passed.

“ *Resolved*, That this society gratefully acknowledge the kindness of the several clergymen in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Brooklyn, and Philadelphia, who so warmly espoused our cause and tendered the use of their pulpits to our pastor.

“ *Resolved*, That this society entertain the liveliest gratitude to their worthy and respected pastor, the Rev. Joseph Harrington, Jr., for his zealous, laborious, and efficient exertions in procuring the amount necessary for the completion of our house of worship.”

The following is an extract from a letter dated April 13th, 1842, addressed to Rev. Francis Parkman by the trustees of the society.

“ Notwithstanding the unexampled distress and embarrassments which have pervaded this community, in common with others, it is with unfeigned gratification that we are able to state that our society has been slowly but steadily increasing, that our church is acquiring a strength beyond our most sanguine expectations, cheering to the cause of Christianity and its friends. But notwithstanding all this, for which we must render thanks to a kind Providence, we

deem it our duty to set before you the great pecuniary difficulties with which we are struggling and for which there would seem to be no relief at present. The sum guaranteed to our worthy pastor for the current year is nine hundred dollars, to be increased to ten hundred and forty if possible. While we deeply regret that any contingency should have forced us to decrease his salary, we sincerely trust that it will only be temporary. He has secured our gratitude and esteem by expressing his acquiescence in this measure, and by consenting to remain with us, notwithstanding the many advantageous offers he has received from other places. Appreciating as we do the spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion which has ever guided him, we do not hesitate to say that he will be seconded by all friends of the cause in this place. We are fully aware that the liberality so freely bestowed upon us for past years gives us but little or no claim to any further assistance, but under our present embarrassments it would seem that, if ever that assistance should be continued, it is at the present time.

“ Our society is composed mostly of young men of little means, struggling with adverse circumstances. They have made strenuous efforts to sustain our church, and we know they will continue to do so ; they have willing spirits, but now little ability. We have dwelt on this matter, wishing our Eastern friends to understand clearly our present situation. For the future we have the most earnest hope. It has pleased a beneficent God to crown the labors of our pastor with great success. The doctrines of Christianity as advanced by him have created a deep religious sentiment in many. Their constant attendance and strong interest manifested in all religious subjects cannot but be gratifying results to him who has so earnestly labored for us, and cheering to all friends of the Gospel, which has but to be

widely spread, and prejudices and oppositions, which are now wearing away, will soon be dissipated. While we have ourselves increased in numbers, in the country round about us an equal spirit is manifested."

And that these sentiments of affection and respect continued in full force to the last is shown by the following letter, among numerous similar testimonials.

"August 16th, 1844.

"REV. JOSEPH HARRINGTON : —

"Dear Sir,— At a meeting of the members of the First Unitarian Society, held on Saturday evening, the 10th instant, a unanimous vote was passed instructing the Trustees to express to you, in behalf of the meeting, their deep regret that circumstances have rendered it necessary for you to remove from your present field of usefulness, their heavy obligations for your faithful services, and their kindest wishes for your future welfare and happiness.

"In dissolving your pastoral relations with this society, we feel that you will, like ourselves, experience many painful emotions; we also feel that our church owes its present strength and great promise for the future chiefly to your active and arduous labors, not only among us, but among our brethren at the East, and that our obligations to you are greatly enhanced by the many discouragements and privations which have surrounded you, and which are incident to a new country, and we shall look back with feelings of heartfelt gratitude and pleasure upon your sojourn with us and your faithful labors amid so many trying scenes. In assuring you, in conclusion, of the hearty wishes of the society for your prosperity and happiness wherever your home may be, we feel that we have but very indifferently

discharged the duty assigned us, in expressing the kindly feelings and intentions of the meeting.

“ J. H. HODGSON,  
E. K. ROGERS.”

Thus ended his residence at Chicago. He retired with sadness from a place never wholly congenial to his taste, but with a consciousness that he had been faithful to the last. Parting with many sincere friends and true-hearted Christians, he turned his reluctant steps towards old Massachusetts.

After a short period of repose, he was invited by several prominent friends of the Unitarian cause in Boston, among whom was the late lamented Henry H. Fuller, whose hand and heart were ever ready for any good work, to take measures towards establishing a new society at the “South End.” He labored zealously and effectually in this cause; and while thus engaged, he was applied to by the “Benevolent Fraternity of Churches” to supply the pulpit of the Suffolk Street Chapel, made vacant by the resignation of the Rev. Mr. Sargent. He engaged to preach for them one year; hoping that, within that period, the new society would have accumulated sufficient strength to become permanently organized. But owing to circumstances which it is unnecessary to detail, it was found impracticable to carry this project forward, and it was either given up, or the proposed society was merged in some other congregation. The committee and worshippers at the Suffolk Street Chapel would gladly have had him remain with them as a permanent pastor, but he preferred a different field of labor.

During the winter of 1844-45, he preached two Sundays at Hartford, Connecticut, before a Unitarian society, first organized in July, 1844; and he was urgently requested to accept a call from them, but declined the offer at that time, feeling himself pledged to stand by the "South End" enterprise, until its fate was finally decided.

In April, 1845, his second son was born, again awakening in his father's heart that most delicious of all earthly dreams, the hope to leave behind him one who should bear his name to posterity, but in one short month this hope was blasted.

The call to Hartford was unanimously repeated after his engagement at Suffolk Street had terminated, and it was accepted. On the first Sunday of January, 1846, he preached his first sermon to the congregation as his own people.

To detail the events of the next six years of his Christian ministry is much easier than to appreciate the peculiar difficulties of his position. His was not a life of ease. The society was small and unpopular, surrounded as it was with other denominations who would naturally look with extreme aversion on the intruder. He felt, from the beginning, that his labors would be arduous; and while he hoped for the best, he never participated in the sanguine expectations of many of his people.

There was not only a strong prejudice against the doctrines of Unitarianism at Hartford, but a decided disinclination to allow their apostle to be admitted into the society of other clergymen. He was avoided, publicly and privately, by some ministers of the

Gospel, who carried their exclusive feelings further, perhaps, than they would have done, had they been better acquainted with his real views, or with the Christian character of him they proscribed. And although he was occasionally associated with them in the cause of education, of which he was a most active, well-informed, and efficient promoter, yet there were some who could never lay aside their antipathy against one who rejected the doctrine of the Trinity. Mr. Harrington, whose soul was large enough and charitable enough to embrace in love all Christians of whatever denomination, and who acknowledged the common brotherhood of all mankind, suffered intensely from the chilly and oppressive atmosphere of religious intolerance. But to the general rule there were some honorable exceptions, — men distinguished, not only for their liberality in doctrine, but for many of those noble qualities which give dignity and authority to the clerical profession.

It is but an act of justice to mention the names of the Rev. Dr. Bushnell and the Rev. Thomas Clark of Christ's Church; nor should the late lamented Gallaudet be forgotten, — a firm believer in the "Orthodox" faith, but an advocate of freedom of opinion, and one whose heart beat in unison with that of his persecuted friend in every philanthropic cause.

Better acquaintance with the tone of Mr. Harrington's character, his blameless life, his ardent labors in every good work, finally won for him a more friendly feeling, and melted away something of that icy coldness which chilled and saddened the first years of his life at Hartford.

But soon another trial awaited him. It became evident that the church in which he preached at Hartford must be sold, unless the debt of the society could be liquidated. This his people were wholly unable to do, finding quite enough to contend with in discharging their ordinary expenses. Bitter experience in his former effort to beg for the church in Chicago had taught him how irksome, how humiliating, how repulsive to all his tastes and sensibilities, would be the task of soliciting in person the aid which his people demanded.

He felt that he could not propose this course; but he received from Dr. Gannett an urgent letter, putting it to his conscience. "You are," he writes, "*the only man who can save the church.*" And as he revolved the subject in his own mind, it so appeared to him, and he felt, that, however distasteful, repulsive, was the effort, he had no right to listen to suggestions of personal sensitiveness or individual scruples. Conscience pointed the way; he had but to go forward. Home, ease, health, and as it proved, life itself, were sacrificed at last. He entered with characteristic resolution upon the disheartening work, — desperate it might almost be called, for his society had small claims, as he too well knew, upon the sympathies of others, and he had already gleaned the field for his flock at Chicago.

Many will long remember the Christian manner in which he fulfilled his wearisome task, and the manly appeal which won its way to all hearts.

While on this mission, his power as a preacher was first revealed to his brethren in the ministry.

He gained many to his cause, because it was his cause, and his whole heart was in it. Generous men, whose names it would not be delicate to reveal, came forward to the rescue of the church at Hartford, and by their sympathy threw an occasional ray of sunshine over the dark and lonely hours of heart-sickness he suffered while engaged in this uncongenial work. No eye but the All-seeing fell upon the discouraging struggles he went through, none but He could see the self-denial of his faithful servant, who, with His blessing, was successful, and brought his church triumphantly out of all its troubles. And the grateful thanks of his people threw back bright, golden tints over the rough and thorny path he had travelled.

Through all these years of his residence in Hartford, Mr. Harrington was earnestly engaged in advancing the cause of popular education, and his labors were justly appreciated. "He was appointed, during this period, Chairman of the Board of Visitors of the Public Schools, in the success of which he took a lively interest; and he continued to fill this office, to the entire satisfaction of all parties, till he left the city."

He labored continually for the good of others; and that he also had his own private perplexities and difficulties, the following extract from a record, never intended for publication, will plainly show.

"During all this time, the expenses of his household were reduced to the least possible outlay consistent with his position; his library received no additions except from the



occasional generosity of a friend ; he allowed himself no journeys, nor even the relief of exchanges, because he felt that he had no right to expend money on himself. Passionately fond of music, he refrained from attending concerts, and, in short, denied himself every enjoyment which cost money, and all luxuries and comforts, till he could feel that they might be conscientiously indulged in. Always scrupulously neat in his person, his clothes were nevertheless often threadbare. Till his debts were paid, he said he must consent to ' look poor.'

"He never allowed a laborer to call twice for his pay. One morning he was discussing, at home, the economical expenditure of a small sum of money, which was all he then had, when a man called to whom the greater proportion was due for labor performed the previous week. On the spur of the moment, it was suggested that he might call again the next week, when the quarter's salary would be paid, but Mr. Harrington unhesitatingly replied, ' No, never do that ; if any suffer, let it be ourselves.' "

All old debts, in some instances forgotten by the creditors themselves, were one by one wiped away, principal and interest.

Thus he lived, at that time, isolated from all his old friends, excluded from the sympathy of most of his fellow-clergymen, struggling with limited means, compelled to see his beloved wife deprived of the luxuries and even the comforts to which she had been accustomed, giving up, not only the indulgences of refined taste, but even the books which he most longed for ; heroically denying himself every gratification for the sole purpose of discharging his debts, and doing his duty as a Christian servant of God ; and all this with perfect submission, without com-

plaint or murmur, without opening his burdened heart to his most intimate friends, for fear of distressing them. Is not this heroism higher than that which conquers a thousand cities?

It was early in March, 1852, when it seemed certain that his efforts to save the church at Hartford would be successful, and but little more remained to be done, that he received the first intimation of a call to San Francisco. He replied that he could take no subject into consideration until he had finished the work upon which he was engaged. This was done in the following May; but as soon as he came to the quiet and confinement of his own study, he began to feel the effect of his exertions, and from that period he dated the disease, which, gradually developing, aggravated by various causes, terminated his earthly career. He was never well, never himself again.

When the proposition to go to California came before him for definite consideration, and the novelty of the idea wore off with familiarity, his desire was to determine what he ought to do. He felt that it was not his duty to remain permanently in Hartford, — he had done his utmost for this parish; and his conviction was, that he was called to do more good elsewhere than he could accomplish in that narrow sphere.

He pondered long before he decided on this great move, and his will seemed to repose entirely on the will of God respecting it. His deliberation ended in the resolve to devote himself, with all the energy of his being, to the work of the Gospel in this inspiring

field. While passing a few days in New York and Brooklyn, on an exchange, in June, he took a severe cold, from the effects of which he suffered acutely, being under constant medical treatment from that time till he left for San Francisco. Few of his parishioners knew how ill he was during the last three weeks of his stay in Hartford, having, for two Sundays previous to the last, only left his bed to perform public services, returning to it as soon as they were over. The exertion and anxiety consequent upon removal, packing furniture, &c., were exceedingly exhausting to him; but as he was enjoined in the call to California to make as much haste as possible, he allowed himself no rest in preparation for the steamer of the 20th of July. His physician said that medicine was of little avail while his mind and his time were so occupied, but recommended the sea voyage, and thought that when once "off soundings" he would be well again.

His last sermon was commenced late on Saturday evening, after a week of incessant toil; and, when finished, he was so exhausted by the effort that nothing but the excitement of the occasion enabled him to deliver it. "His deathly paleness was remarked by many, who, ignorant of what he had gone through, attributed it wholly to his feelings at parting with his people. This parting, no doubt, tended to depress him, but he was fitter at that moment for the seclusion of a sick chamber than for the services of the pulpit. His discourse was, however, delivered with more than his usual energy, and to a crowded house, many having come then who never entered

the church before. Expressions of regret at his leaving came alike from all denominations, and to his people the occasion was one of the deepest sadness and bereavement."

The strong feeling of respect and attachment entertained towards their pastor was manifested in public and private. The following resolutions were unanimously adopted and placed on the records of the church.

"Whereas, the Rev. Joseph Harrington has tendered his resignation of the pastoral charge of the First Unitarian Congregational Society of Hartford: And whereas, its acceptance by the society is deemed a suitable occasion for expressing the fraternal and respectful regard cherished by us towards him: Therefore,

*Resolved*, That in his connection with us, since the completion of the church, he has attracted to himself the full measure of our confidence, esteem, and friendship.

*Resolved*, That while his extensive acquirements and eminent abilities will amply commend him to all that fraternize with us in religious sentiment, we shall take pleasure in bearing record of him as a gentleman estimable and exemplary in all the walks of social life, as a minister of superior endowments and attainments, as a religious teacher of reliable and acceptable Christian doctrine, and as a pastor assiduous, affectionate, and faithful in the discharge of his various duties.

*Resolved*, That while this society reluctantly accepts the resignation of Mr. Harrington, it cherishes unwavering faith in a prosperous future, and at the same time it cannot but hope that the sphere of the usefulness of Mr. Harrington will be extended by his proposed withdrawal to a new field of labor.

“ *Resolved*, That we cordially unite our best wishes for his future success and happiness, and fervently invoke Heaven to shower upon him its choicest blessings.

“ *Resolved*, That the secretary transmit a copy of the foregoing resolutions to Mr. Harrington, and cause the same to be published in the daily papers of this city.”

The following extracts from a sermon preached after the decease of Mr. Harrington, by Rev. Charles Brooks, before the Hartford society, give an interesting account of him as a minister.

“ In a community where a profound philosophy of human life, a divine right of mental freedom, and where Christian hopes of a true millennial glory are as common as household words, Mr. Harrington was born and educated. He breathed these principles wherever he went, and they made him what he was, and they are calculated to make such persons. They present no obstructions to the utmost expanse of mind and heart. Both intellect and affection develop under their influence as naturally as the petals of the rose unfold and expand beneath the sunshine and the dew. I have stated these facts and made these remarks, because they furnish the only proper position from which the taste, opinions, and character of our friend can be viewed.

“ With these truths before us, let us look at some of the salient features of his mind and heart.

“ You remember his zeal for the improvement of common schools, and the extension of education. You can now see that he would have been a traitor to his own training and his own faith if he had folded his arms in idleness and unconcern. All voices in your city, — the public papers and your valedictory resolutions (unanimously voted in your parish meeting), all unite in saying that he conferred permanent benefits on the schools, by elevating the standard

of teaching and multiplying the means of improvement. That his heart was in the work, is proved by the fact that the children delighted to see his pleasant face, and hear his rich, musical voice in their school-rooms. A bad man cannot win the permanent love of children.

“ You remember the affluence of his conversation during his parochial visits. He was a genial spirit, and loved to talk. So remarkable was his eloquence in social debate, that he would at times throw over his thoughts a drapery of illustration as glorious as the flush of morning on the western hills. Commanding a wide compass of phrase, his extemporaneous sermons had a freshness and electricity which touched all hearts. It is said that ‘ he never missed the right word.’ This is no small praise in our community, where we daily witness such random heaping of turgid epithets. Few can always command the word that geometrically covers the idea. Many of us, in pensive mortification, are obliged to carry our diamonds in broken baskets.

“ He was a man of affairs, and could manage business well. With this part of his character, I became personally acquainted during his mission to Massachusetts, last winter, to gather funds for liquidating your parish debt. In this, he seemed to me to be a man of good judgment, sterling integrity, and indomitable perseverance. *He* was not for looking back, when the journey lies forward. Throughout that arduous and unwelcome service he bore himself like a scholar, like a gentleman, and like a Christian. He knew that he was laboring for a people who could appreciate his efforts. Full to overflowing with his subject, I marked the courteous gravity and gentle patience with which he repeated the details, whenever requested. His public ‘ Appeal ’ showed his tact ; it was mercantile and short, just the two qualities to win our ‘ merchant princes.’ Your gratitude to

him I know is deep and hearty. By his success, he has connected his name for ever with your church, and you will rejoice to transmit it in your permanent records.

“Not devoted to metaphysics, he preferred to preach about the common ideas and pursuits, the common wants and hopes of man. As he was gifted in understanding the common affairs of the world, and discerning the ruling motives of men, there were few who could preach better on this text: ‘Thou art the man!’ With sin, in every form, he held no parley, made no compromise. You can testify to his fidelity.

‘Thou knowest how bland with years his wisdom grew,  
And with what phrases, steeped in love,  
He sheathed the sharpness of rebuke.’

“Knowing how the masses think and feel, he could look from their angle, and therefore his appeals were full of practical philosophy and common sense. If he had faults of style, they arose from having too many words and too many rhetorical figures.

“As an expounder of the Sacred Scriptures, he was cautious and faithful, bringing to his aid all the light he could find in the wide circle of differing commentators, believing that others were as sincere as himself, and perhaps more learned. He was a prayerful student of the Book of books. His reverence for it prevented him from touching the harp of the Prophet with that unholy violence which snaps its chords. He left the place of his birth, where the conflict about doctrine had nearly ceased, and came here, where it has just begun. He brought with him the light of truth, sanctified by the warmth of love. The weapons of his warfare were Scripture and argument, *never* ridicule or denunciation. He did not believe that slander or fagots have the essence of persuasion in them. His ruling aim was to

express the whole will of God, and declare the whole Gospel of Christ, regardless of human creeds or worldly success. He went with his whole soul for the whole Bible, and that made him higher and deeper and broader than all sects. He was

‘That freeman whom the Truth makes free.’

“You will long remember his extraordinary power in reading the Sacred Scriptures. So thoroughly did he apprehend their meaning, that his reading of them had the value of a commentary. His prayers, too,—how varied! how fervent! how humble! In the administration of the sacred ordinances, he adhered to the simplicity there is in Christ, and left the complexity there is in men.

“In his parochial duties, he was genial at the marriage feast, tender in the chamber of sickness, and sympathizing in the house of sorrow. His religion could be better defined by the word *love*, than *justice*.

“Perhaps his peculiarity was his wholeness. He seemed a fortunate blending of all the forces, physical, intellectual, and moral. There were none of those ragged projections which mar symmetry. The intellect, as well as the passions, was subjected to conscience, and conscience was enthroned as God’s representative in human nature. This favorable adjustment of parts and harmonious action of powers made his judgments seem to others like common sense and natural truth. When a man thus fits the world, and the world fits him, his decisions may be relied on.

“We do not suppose that he was infallible, or that he was without the imperfections which may grow out of a decisive, hopeful, and masculine character. Shadows are a consequence of sunshine.

“There are several pleasing traits on which I have not time to speak, and there are many ties which bound you to him which your hearts can feel better than I can describe. I know you will do justice to both.



“ We come, then, to this conclusion : that he was a wise man, a good scholar, a warm friend, a safe counsellor, an eloquent preacher, a faithful minister, and a devout Christian. The conscientious convictions of such a man, resulting from mature examination, are entitled to respect. Let us glance at a few of them.

“ He was a conservative, and not fond of aëronautic expeditions in theology. In essentials, he was for unity, in non-essentials, for liberty, and in all, for charity. Rejecting all creeds of human device, he accepted the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, as his creed. Accordingly, he believed that there is one God, the *Father*. That the government of *this* world, and all worlds, is paternal, and that it is as just for God to be merciful as it is merciful for him to be just. He believed in Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, the one Mediator between God and man, the divine Teacher, the all-sufficient Saviour, the visible Representative of God, who is invisible. He believed that every child is born pure, and that Christ said what was true when he declared that ‘ of such is the kingdom of Heaven.’ Moreover, that the child, under proper Christian nurture, will grow up a Christian, and that the development of the moral character and spiritual life will be as natural as the growth of the plant, or the progress of the seasons. It would obey a great law of nature. He believed that man is philosophically and morally free, — free to think, free to will, free to act, — and is therefore responsible ; that he is placed in this world at school, schooling for eternity, and therefore has the making of his own character, and that his character here determines his condition hereafter. He believed that error is mortal, and cannot always live ; truth immortal, and can never die. He believed that God’s grace is unpurchased and free ; that the terms of pardon and redemption are offered, ‘ without money and without price,’

to every sinner ; that heaven is open to every holy and pious mind ; that God will give his sanctifying spirit to all who truly seek it, and will at last render to every man according to his deeds.

“ With such a faith, and the character that such a faith makes, no wonder that he was selected as the fit expounder of enlightened and rational Christianity to the wide-awake, independent, and exposed Unitarians of San Francisco. He was emphatically *the* man for that important mission.”

Mr. Harrington left Hartford on the 14th of July 1852, to visit his friends in Roxbury before setting out for California ; and on the 20th, he, with his wife and daughter, took passage from New York in the steamer Illinois for Aspinwall. During the voyage, he suffered much from debility, but attributed it to the effects of sea-sickness. Although there was no rough weather, he could sit up but little, and was ill-fitted to endure the hardships of the route across the Isthmus to Panama. An extract from Mrs. Harrington’s account of the journey says :—

“ Words have no meaning when attempting to describe our three days’ travel from Aspinwall to Panama. The debilitating atmosphere, wretched, dirty food, and miserable lodgings, added to the excessive fatigue, making it almost unendurable for persons in full health and strength. We rode on mules from Cruces to Panama, a distance of twenty or twenty-five miles. We started at seven, A. M., and rode, with only once dismounting, till half past nine, P. M. The road was in its worst state, and Mr. Harrington’s mule, in struggling through the mud, twice broke the girths and threw him off. During the first three hours the rain fell in such torrents as can only be seen in tropical climates, and

we were, of course, thoroughly drenched. Arriving at Panama, we were put, ten or twelve (ladies and gentlemen indiscriminately), into one room, with dirty cots to lie on, and no means of washing or of changing our clothes."

The steamer in which their passages for San Francisco had been engaged having been filled up with United States troops, they were compelled to wait six days at Panama.

Mr. Harrington had been assured, before leaving New York, by persons on whose statements he had reason to place implicit reliance, that the fever which was said to prevail at that time on the Isthmus was confined almost exclusively to low and dissipated travellers and the laborers on the railroad, and that, with proper caution, there was no more danger then than at any other season. This statement was in some degree erroneous, and as it proved, it was impossible to guard against exposure and over-fatigue.

There were many cases of Panama fever on the voyage to San Francisco; and though none of these proved fatal among the cabin passengers, there were, from this and other diseases, a number of deaths during the passage. At five of the burials at sea Mr. Harrington officiated, and he exerted himself to the utmost to console the bereaved, who in several instances were left entirely alone in the world.

On the last Sunday of the voyage he was for the first time able to preach. His sermon, which was extempore, was on the "God-given power of the human will for self-discipline."

They reached San Francisco on the 27th of August, where they found kind friends ready to greet

them and welcome them heartily to their new home.

On the following Sunday he preached in the United States District Court Room, to a large number of persons. This was a most delightful surprise to him. Accustomed to small beginnings, he had not expected so large a congregation; and in the course of the week he was gratified to learn that he was wholly acceptable in his new pulpit.

The next Sunday, the Court Room was so crowded that many went away, unable to procure seats. A large hall was afterwards engaged as a place of worship; and although it was feared that it would prove too large, the first service determined that even this would not comfortably seat all who came. Here Mr. Harrington preached three Sundays, occupying the intervening weeks in making acquaintances among his new society, and also among other denominations. In that freer, broader atmosphere, where the narrow bonds of sectarianism loose their hold, the cordial hand of brotherhood was extended to him by ministers of differing theological opinions, giving him, for the first time since his entrance into the ministry, the happiness of unrestrained association with the clergy.

The Building Committee now became much interested in the project for a new church, and Mr. Harrington entered warmly into their plans. But his health failed him, and after struggling manfully against the evil which had been long threatening him, he was obliged to yield to the diseases whose combined force he could not resist.

But the account of his illness can be best given in the words of her whose privilege it was, after a happy union of nearly eleven years, enriched by an ever-increasing store of mutual love and respect, to stand by his bedside, administering and receiving comfort to the last.

“From the moment of arrival, he was in health less and less himself. He had one or two attacks of slight illness, commencing with chills, which confined him to his bed for a day or two at a time ; and his friends and physician said that he was passing through an acclimating process, and that it might be a month or two before he was quite restored. The fact that almost every one goes through acclimation after arrival, more or less severe, was the reason that his symptoms did not cause more alarm.

“About the first of October his debility seemed to increase ; a short walk fatigued him so much, that he was obliged to lie down after it, and all exercise was disagreeable to him. At last he complained of constant chilliness, and one evening, after returning from a call, he went to bed shivering violently. A burning fever ensued, accompanied by severe pains in the limbs and back, and intense headache. His physician pronounced his disease Panama fever, but without aggravated symptoms. On the third day he was seized with congestion of the heart, which resulted in paralysis, from the waist down. His prostration was then so great, that he could not turn his head or raise his hand ; but from that time he suffered no severe pain.

“After the first night of this excessive weakness, he first spoke to me, with great solemnity, of the possibility of not recovering, calmly expressing his wishes with respect to certain business matters, in that event. I strove to do away with such thoughts, as neither myself nor the physi-

cian had any apprehensions at that time as to the result of his illness ; but his seriousness was not changed, and I now believe that from that time his conviction was, that his end was at hand. He seemed to see at a glance through the efforts at lively conversation by his physicians, in order to induce him to relinquish the idea of his danger ; and one day, in particular, after one of the consulting physicians had been telling the news, and giving an animated description of late occurrences, which he thought might engage his attention, he turned to me and remarked : ‘ Dr. Merritt’s motto is, Encouragement.’ He watched his own symptoms closely, counted his own pulse, watched the effect of all medicines, and knew from hour to hour the slightest change in his case, as well as if he had been a physician. Throughout his entire illness his mind was apparently as clear and active as when in health.

“ He seemed utterly at rest in spirit, reposing unhesitatingly in God’s will. I once asked him if he regretted in *any event* that he had come to California. He replied, ‘ No, — the call was from God ; I did my duty ; I would not but have come.’ Perfect calmness possessed him, — ever grateful for favorable symptoms, — ever uncomplainingly resigned in discouraging change. He prayed constantly and fervently for entire submission on the part of *both*, in the event of separation, and his faith was unfaltering in *re-union beyond the grave*.

“ On one occasion, when incidental reference was made to a person who had treated him ill, he said ‘ *all resentment is wiped away*.’

“ He never forgot, in his hours of extremest pain or weariness, the comfort of those who were watching with him ; caring lest they should become exhausted through fatigue, or lest, through their devotion to him, their business or their home duties should suffer. He also constantly contrasted

his own sick bed (surrounded by wife and friends) with many others in California, whose suffering occupants endure *alone*, and die far from all that their hearts hold dear; and for the three weeks that he lay on 'his bed of languishing,' not a murmur, not an expression of impatience, fell from his lips.

"With the paralysis, the disease which had caused him so much suffering before leaving Hartford [inflammation of the kidneys], reappeared; and though from the deadening of the nerves of sensation he suffered no pain, yet the symptoms were aggravated and unaffected by medicine. The physicians considered that he suffered from a *complication* of diseases, each influencing the other. At this time there was but slight change in his general symptoms. He regained the use of his limbs *a little*; but there was no return of sensation to the spine.

"Owing to his being much disturbed by the noise of workmen, engaged in making additions to the hotel in which we boarded, the physicians advised his removal to some quieter place, and accordingly, on Saturday, October 30th, he was carried a short distance to the house of his generous friend and parishioner, Captain F. W. Macondray. We watched anxiously for the effect of this exertion upon him, but we could not see that it was other than beneficial. When he uncovered his face after being laid on his new bed, it wore such an expression of pleasure, that Dr. Merritt remarked, 'Why, Mr. Harrington, we will move you every day, if it improves you so much.'

"The next morning (Sunday) Dr. Morrison found him much better. He had passed the night in great comfort, and his general symptoms were highly encouraging. The doctor observed, 'You have nothing to do now, Mr. Harrington, but to *get well* as fast as possible.' During the day, the news of his being better spread rapidly, and many

friends called to congratulate me on the happy change. Joseph himself seemed gratefully, prayerfully, accepting life anew.

“When the doctor came to see him, about ten o’clock that night, he found a great alteration in his pulse, and every indication of rapid sinking. He only intimated his fears to one person, — the friend who was going to watch the latter part of the night. I went to bed after midnight, in the adjoining room, entirely unconscious of any change.

“In the morning he was evidently so much worse that all my fears returned. Three additional physicians were called in, but they could suggest nothing to stay the precious life that was fast ebbing away. Joseph watched their faces as they examined pulse, tongue, and skin. *Question* seemed unnecessary; their countenances were hopeless. When I returned to the room after a short absence with the physicians, and stood back of his pillows, that he might not observe the emotion which could not be controlled, he turned his head quite round to see me, saying, ‘Ah! you cannot conceal those tears.’ From this moment he accepted *death* in the same spirit in which he had received the prospect of returning *life*. With respect to the dear ones he must leave behind, he said he had no fears, — God would provide for them. During the day he remarked, ‘I don’t think of myself; I feel only for my bereaved wife and child.’ And again, ‘Tell my dear mother that I loved her devotedly, and always loved her.’

“Among his associates, with whom he had conversed frequently while at San Francisco, upon matters of *opinion* and *faith*, was an Episcopal clergyman, who did not believe that the faith of a Unitarian would support the heart at the hour of death. He stood at his bedside in silence. ‘Brother Moore,’ said the dying Christian, ‘One of us lieth low, and the other standeth erect, through the will of



the same merciful Father. I go willingly, — joyfully, — all through a glorious Saviour.’

“Once he said, ‘I fear the Lord has marked me for his own.’ ‘No,’ said I, ‘you *trust*, you do not *fear*.’ ‘O yes!’ he replied, fervently, — ‘perfect trust and perfect submission.’

“Gradually he grew weaker in body, but his clear consciousness never forsook him; he fully appreciated his dying state.

“He had always had a great dread of physical pain, and now, while speaking to me of the slight comparative suffering of his illness, he added, ‘Oh, if it would please the Lord to let the last hour be without agony!’ And his prayer was answered in mercy. God took him gently to himself. The last words he spoke were in recognition of his child, ‘My own darling little Nelly!’

“At eight o’clock in the evening (Tuesday, November 2d, 1852), he passed serenely to his eternal reward.

“From the commencement to the end of his illness, he was surrounded by every comfort that devoted friends could furnish or wealth procure. Not only to the family of his hospitable parishioner, and to his own congregation generally, was he an especial care, but friends of all denominations vied with each other in kind attentions and faithful watchings. The house was perpetually thronged with anxious inquirers and eager offerers of service; and if love were strong to bind on earth, he must have been spared.

“The burial service was conducted by Rev. Mr. Hunt, of the Orthodox church. He used (by request) the ‘service’ of the Unitarian Church of St. Louis, and made a beautiful and touching address upon the character, life, and death of his lamented brother.”

The remains of Rev. Joseph Harrington were interred at San Francisco, November 4th, 1852, and at Forest Hills Cemetery, Roxbury, Massachusetts, December 13th, 1853.

The news of his death spread sadness over the hearts of many, who, even in a short acquaintance, had become strongly attached to him ; and in various parts of the country, where Mr. Harrington had been best known, obituary notices appeared in the religious and secular newspapers, expressing profound grief for his loss, a just appreciation of his learning, and admiration of his power and eloquence as a preacher.

The loss to the society at San Francisco seemed irreparable ; and their sentiments were expressed in the following resolutions, passed on the 8th of November, at a meeting of the Unitarians of that city.

“ *Resolved*, That the death of our beloved pastor, the Rev. Joseph Harrington, has impressed us with the profoundest sorrow.

“ *Resolved*, That whilst we bow in submission to this most afflicting dispensation of Providence, we cannot but feel that we have lost the head of our church ; one who was pre-eminently fitted to be the pioneer of our faith upon the Pacific, and around whom might well cluster all the hopes and efforts of our new society ; while our city has lost one whose influence, both as a Christian minister and a practical philanthropist, would have been wide-spread and highly beneficial.

“ *Resolved*, That the brief but delightful connection allowed us with our departed pastor and friend has endeared him to the hearts of all of us, and taught us how to appreciate the greatness of their loss who were connected with him by the ties of natural affection.

“ *Resolved*, That we sincerely sympathize with the family of the deceased in the distressing bereavement which has befallen them and us, and offer to them our heartfelt condolence in our common misfortune.

“ *Resolved*, That these resolutions be entered in the records of our society, and copies transmitted to the family of our late pastor.

“ GEORGE V. NOYES, *Secretary*.”

“ So passed from earth to heaven God’s gifted and faithful servant.”

From the time when he prayerfully consecrated himself to the work of the ministry, all events assumed to him a religious aspect, and every nerve and fibre of his mental constitution seemed penetrated with the ethereal spirit of Christianity.

Romance, touched by celestial fire, was transformed into that beautiful devotion which for ever united him to her in whose arms he breathed his last. The heroic elements of his character infused vigor, resolution, energy, and fortitude into those efforts which would otherwise have disheartened him. His magnanimity spread a genial atmosphere around him. His devotedness to duty saved him from embarrassments, and generosity to others relieved him from anxious concern for the worldly interests of those who depended on him.

Throughout his ministerial life, filled as it was with changes and self-sacrifice, he felt no misgivings, — no want of confidence in an overruling Providence.

He was sure that all was for the best, and he advanced from one labor to another with enthusiastic

earnestness and trust, with absolute resignation to God's will, and anxious only to live nobly and do his duty.

It would be difficult to find any instance of more entire self-renouncement; or of more childlike submission to the dictates of conscience.

From all those instincts of the heart that made his youth romantic, chivalrous, and even magnanimous, he advanced to those far higher and nobler qualities that made his manhood religious. His powers being consecrated to the service of God, he knew no happiness but in doing His will.

He died in the prime of life, with the most brilliant prospects of usefulness before him, admired, beloved, and revered. The light of his example still shines upon us, although the orb itself has been withdrawn from our hemisphere.

SERMONS.

6\*



# SERMON I.

## CHRIST OUR MASTER AND LORD.

YE CALL ME MASTER AND LORD, AND YE SAY WELL, FOR SO I AM  
— John xiii. 13.

I TAKE comfort, and I find strength, in this declaration of Jesus of Nazareth. My heart welcomes every expression and every act that vindicates the lofty, the unquestionable authority of Christ.

What can be the strength of that disciple who goes to Jesus, carrying in his own bosom the test whereby to weigh Jesus's claims, and determine his authority, — acknowledging it sufficient or insufficient, as it finds response in his own sympathies or intuitions? This is applying the civil theory, that the specific form of government, and the special officers who are to govern, shall be determined by those who are to be the subjects of the government. Consequently, if these subjects unite to condemn and overthrow an existing government, or particular rulers, the act is a release to them of all homage and service.

As I interpret Christ's position and relation to God and to us, this theory is barred out from every

estimate of his sovereignty. The divine right to rule inheres in Jesus Christ. His dominion is absolute. We have no pleas of personal and inalienable prerogative, whereby we may limit or abate that dominion. I do not recognize our competency to say, "Our judgments protest against such or such precepts; we do not find this or that counsel agreeing with the instincts of our natures; the internal evidence of the propriety or wisdom of this injunction, or of that act, is not sufficient to convince us, therefore to that extent we reject the authority of Christ."

I counsel no intellectual servitude. I know the unhappy consequences of an assent to claims against which the heart protests. I know that there can be no life in faith, and no fruits of obedience, where either is the product of a necessity, and not of a cordial impulse.

But there *is* a certain frame of spirit in which we should approach Jesus of Nazereth; and if we admit the verity of the records that speak of him, — if we receive the facts of his transcendent mission, and of his celestial relations, — if we recognize him as the presence of a supernal power, the light of a divine wisdom, and the expression of a heavenly love, — we *cannot fail* to stand meekly before him; and if we question, to question not captiously, not curiously, not selfishly, but with a solemn anxiety, and with a spirit that feels that it may be dealing with mysteries not to be too minutely dissected, — not to be impatiently and sceptically interrogated.

I say this, yet abating no jot of reverence for the



majesty of reason, no jot of faith in the necessity of an intelligent and sifting scrutiny of the highest and most peculiar propositions, whether pertaining to this or to the other worlds, whether to human or to superhuman creatures.

I repeat, we all of us need, in larger measure, the recognition that Christ has entered into the world as by *divine right*; that he comes to claim a throne, that he seats himself thereon to rule and judge, and that the seal of his right to this august sovereignty is the *will of God*, — that the end of this assumption of power is the unlimited and the unresisted control over our whole being, and that the spirit and purpose of this inauguration into supernal authority is the deliverance of our souls from sin.

When Christ, then, says, “I am your Lord and Master,” I interpret him to mean that he is our authoritative moral and spiritual Ruler, — without reserve and without question, supreme over this realm of the soul (of course theoretically under God), but supreme *because utterly under God*; in spirit and aim coincident with him; in action and life manifesting him practically standing to us as God; and that he leaves for us only reverence and submission; admitting the liberty to determine and to comprehend, as best we may, *what he did* say, or what he *did* do, thereafter giving us no freedom but to perform what we find to be his will.

Is it anywhere manifest that the Saviour permitted the wisdom or the righteousness of his words or acts, to be questioned? that he under any circumstance doubted the competency of his teachings, or

the fitness of his course? that he took any counsel of man or admitted any responsibility to man? Can we suppose that Peter's protestations ever modified his acts? or that Matthew's good sense ever shaped his judgment? or that John's fine instincts ever guided his sympathies? or that James's practical turn ever gave a more useful or efficient direction to his love?

If there be one fact conspicuous above another in the life of Christ, it is his independence of human suggestion. He is himself the fountain of the wisdom of others, — the inspirer of their hearts, and the director of their practice. To God alone did he appeal; and God vouchsafed to him a sagacity, a holiness, and a benignity, that were beyond the council, as beyond the full comprehension, of men.

I feel then painfully at variance with that theology which styles Christ our brother. Such phraseology may not indicate any less experience of the power of the Gospel in the individual heart; but it intimates a conception of the nature and relations of Christ which seems to me to contradict the facts of his history, and to be inconsistent with the aim and the efficacy of his mission. In one sense we are the brethren of Christ. He so styles those who do the will of God. In view of the only self-existent one, the universal Father, the whole family of created intelligences, including angels, archangels, and Christ himself, may be said to be brothers, and in the enunciation of a truth, as antagonistic to some signal misstatement, it may be properly said that we are brethren of Christ. Thus, to an assertion that we

were all formed by Christ, as the author of our being, it would be a fitting answer that Christ is our brother in derivation from, and in dependence upon, and in obedience to, the one God. There is also a limited relation under which we may speak of ourselves as the brethren of Christ, as when his merely human aspects are taken into view.

But beyond this, such phraseology grates repulsively on my ear. Christ is the *centre* of my religion, — not merely the author of my philosophy, and the exemplar for my life; and the very words that picture him to me, must lift him above my soul, and invest him with reverence; then, as by fulness of faith, and outflow of affection, and effort to catch his spirit toward God, I may feel myself brought into a loving contact with him. It may be that I shall delight to think that *he* regards *me* as a brother, yet I cannot even then say, in my heart to Christ, *THOU art MY brother*.

“One is your *master*, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.” This, then, is the title and the position of Jesus of Nazareth. Most Christians concede to him this nominal dominion. It will be profitable to inquire into the nature, the sphere, and the reality of the sovereignty.

1. First, what is the nature of this sovereignty? It is not an authority over names and shows and places, or even acts. It has nothing of the nature of a civil magistracy. It can inflict no direct penalties; it can grant no reprieves, no commutations, and no remissions of sentence. It can employ no force, for the very element of its power is the free will of its

subject. Its nature is purely spiritual and loving and gracious. When it speaks, it is with such a tone as inflames no resistance; when it conquers, it exalts, not for itself, but for the victory of its subject; when it is contemned, it sadly and solemnly warns, not as if guarding its own mocked sceptre, but as if in compassion for the wretchedness which the foolish rebel is laying up for himself.

All heavenly in its nature is the authority of Christ. It is clothed with the attributes that encircle the Deity. His power is its right arm; his truth is its open path; his justice is its crown; his holiness is its robe; his mercy is its heart.

2. And what is the sphere of this sovereignty of Christ? The outermost circle of its scope is not approached by any *form* of homage, however elaborately prepared, however gorgeously accompanied, — at whatever cost of toil, of taste, of art, of wealth. It acknowledges no ecclesiastical system as machinery through which it is to compel allegiance. It prescribes no immutable opinions as the high roads over which its benefactions must pass, — it does not deck itself in lawn or scarlet, in cassock or mitre, and refuse its grace to such as doubt the sanctity of its vestments. It has no exclusive chain of anointed hands, through which the electric current of its blessing flows. It holds no special audience in vaulted cathedrals, and at gilded altars. No proprieties of worldliness, no exactness of habits, no armament of theology, no sectarian zeal, no resorts of prudence, no decencies for example's sake, no tributes from the intellect, are its true subjects, — they can

never be naturalized into its realm. No! The sphere of the sovereignty of Christ is the broad, the simple, the humble field of human affections, — the varied domain of human experiences. What we think, what we purpose, what we feel, is the realm over which Christ assumes sway. Consequently, however beset by ignorance, or enlarged by knowledge; though hemmed in by poverty, or lapped in the ease and elegances of wealth; though creeping unnoticed from our cradles to our graves, or climbing the ascents of power and fame; though plodding wearisomely through the shades of sorrow, or bounding under the bright sky of success; careworn or careless; confiding or distrustful; recklessly sinning or penitently serving, — we, our hearts, our souls, are the sphere for the sovereignty of Christ.

3. But now as to the reality of that sovereignty! What must it be to be real? What is to make Christ truly Lord and Master of the soul?

It would seem as if some thought that this our nominal sovereign might be beguiled, by the shows of homage, into the belief that he was enthroned in their hearts. They pass in reverential procession before him, — they salute him with frequent bendings of the knee, — they sing his praises with no stinted voice, — they cry to him, Lord! Lord! But is Christ blind, that he does not see through this hollow service? And do you, who render it, imagine that in that hour, when you stand knocking at the bolted portal of your sovereign's palace, you will fare better than did the foolish virgins, who knocked at the shut door of the marriage dwelling?

There are some, too, who seem to imply by their course that they would entitle themselves to the benefit of Christ's sovereignty, by giving him the *place* of power, while they retain to themselves the substance of it. Such are those who constitute their prejudices or their passions a kind of ministry or college of councillors, who virtually discrown their monarch, make him the instrument through which *they*, under spiritual pretexts, give laws to the realm of the soul. What perversion does selfishness often incite of the sanctions of the Gospel! How do greed, love of pleasure, appetite, uncharitableness, wind insiduously or rush defiantly to their ends, yet as under the standard of the sovereign Christ! Shun any such deliberate disobedience as this. Do not feign, brethren, to honor the Lord and Master; if you would thus deliberately give laws to yourselves, —if you would seek to qualify or to interpret loosely, or to pervert in application, any, the lightest precept of the Saviour. The guile of the heart has devices enough; its impulses, energy enough; its indifference, hardihood enough, to attempt this, independently of any *deliberate* encouragement on your parts, whenever the desires look one way, the restrictions of Christ another. But there is no reality to his supposed sovereignty in your hearts, so long as this practical disloyalty remains. Give him the substance as the name of power.

Again, Christ's sovereignty, to be real, must be continuous. He cannot be enthroned to-day and dethroned to-morrow, and re-established in dominion the third day. There is no such thing in the soul of

man as such vicissitudes of authority. Will the *mob* that riots through the city one hour return to peaceful duty the next, alternating between lawlessness and order? No! the authority of that city is defied, and anarchy is within its borders. So Christ is no longer Lord and Master of that soul, that, under whatever inducement, deliberately suspends the rule of his precepts. It is one thing, frail disciple, for you to trip in your selfish haste, to be seized by some fierce impulse, and be hoodwinked and borne on suddenly to evil, or to be beguiled by a seductive lie into abnegation of your allegiance,—and it is another thing for you, deliberate offender, to seek, though but for an instant, to evade the eye of your Sovereign, or daringly to defy it. There was misfortune under the former circumstances, and extenuation of guilt; under *these* circumstances, there is hard, cold, unpardonable sin.

Still again; the sovereignty of Christ is *real* only as it is *universal*. It is possible for the monarch over a confederated people, consisting of divers tribes, to maintain complete dominion over most of them, while *one* shall have risen in rebellion, and shall have absolutely defied his rule. They may be at peace among themselves, and may lend to their Sovereign their full power, in aid of his effort to reduce the disloyal province.

But, unhappily for any solace for sin, there is no such division among the powers of the soul as will permit a portion of them to acknowledge the sovereignty of Christ, while a part may disallow it. The soul is one. All its faculties are welded to one

consciousness. The act of the man, being the execution of his will, is the act of the whole man. If there be disloyalty in one deed, it is for the time being, not the insurgency of a single province, but the uprising and the anarchy of the entire realm.

The Scriptures warn us against our "easily besetting sins"; but all who only grant to Christ a limited, which is an *unreal* sovereignty, give him rule merely over the sins which do *not* easily beset them, — which never seriously and do not frequently tempt them. While in the direction of their most signal frailties, or their most exacting desires, they reserve jurisdiction to themselves. "All these have they kept from their youth up, — all these they still keep," but the cankering lust that is eating at their souls, — that secret carnal affection, whether of pride, or selfishness, or sensuality, or covetousness, this they cannot banish, and they "go away sorrowing," from the injunction of their master, and practically abjure his sovereignty.

Alas! my brethren, the law of Christ within us must remain unbroken; his reign must be uniform, permanent, and unlimited, or it is not real; and if it be not real, it is nothing.

When, then, finally, we come to bring the question *home*, of the reality of Christ's sovereignty in our own bosoms, the best of us may well return a look of sorrowful doubt. Is Jesus of Nazareth our "Master and Lord?" Let the history of our daily life reply. What is there of the spirit of Christian consecration in it? What is there of systematic effort to do the Master's will? If, as our courier



traverses the territories of our experience, he finds, *here*, anxieties that have their origin in pure worldliness; *there*, material cares, that are crowding irreverently around the throne of the Sovereign; *now*, peevishness, ill-temper, uncharitableness; *then*, the pursuit of an unlawful pleasure or unlawful gain; *here*, something of deceit; *there*, something of pride, and so on, well may that messenger bring back tidings of a slack and doubtful allegiance.

My friends, it is *your* Lord and Master here, within these sanctuary walls, and under the lowlier roofs of your dwellings; he is your Master in these public ministrations, and in the musings of your secret hearts. He is your Master through the whole round of your duties, whether the business of the street, the workshop, the counting-room, the public office, or the obscurer cares of the household. He is your Master in every personal and private act, and in any act that affects your neighbor. He is "Lord and Master" of your speech and of your conduct, and of the unbetrayed purposes and aims of your hearts. He is Lord over your tempers, your ambitions, your joys, griefs, perplexities, and successes. He is the one Supreme guide to the way of your souls to everlasting life. Will you permit your mournful indifference to his benignant rule? Will you set up your gods of wood or metal, of strange device, instead of him? Do you love the chains which bind you to an illusive earthly joy rather than the free allegiance that gives you the range of Heaven? So, abjuring Christ, you disallow the blessed reign of *God* in your souls.

Happy they who take upon themselves the vows of allegiance unto "Master and Lord"! Blessed, unspeakably blessed they, if they keep those vows! May God defend the sovereignty of his Son in their hearts for ever and ever.

"And now unto the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory through Jesus Christ for ever."

## S E R M O N  I I .

### G O D  W O R K S  I N  Y O U .

WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING ;  
FOR IT IS GOD WHICH WORKETH IN YOU BOTH TO WILL AND  
TO DO OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE.— Philippians ii. 12, 13.

IN the first clause of this text the Apostle enjoins a duty ; in the latter clause he offers a reason and an encouragement for the performance of the duty. The duty is the “working out of our own salvation.” The encouragement is the “working of God within us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

1. Let us first consider the encouragement. God works in us. It seems to me that no one, not specially hardened in vice, or signally insensible by nature, can fail to admit this ; and even such a one will probably acknowledge that there have been times when it would have falsified his experience to deny an inward working of God.

I do not seek to penetrate the mystery of consciousness, to define how the Deity makes himself felt within us. But the fact itself it is essential to admit. Whatever theory of depravity be adopted, it must recognize this universal interior operation of the Deity ; for depravity, after all, consists in a defect

or a perversity pertaining to the *will* as the executive force of the man, as the positive character, rather than to any natural condition of being which may be said to lie beneath and behind the will. It is not depravity, a culpable sinfulness, to have an inward chamber within which God's Spirit never dwelt or spoke. It is depravity, that man, consciously witnessing this inner presence and hearing this inner voice, should yet set them at naught.

This interior flame, like the Promethean fire, seems to come with life from Heaven. Once was it made supernaturally visible. Before and since the miraculous era it has been known only by its divine heat and light within the consciousness.

And it burns despite a neglected or a perverse education. Probably never one grew to manhood, whatever were the circumstances of his birth and culture, who did not, at some time, feel himself the subject of a divine possession. He may not have known it by the name, divine. He may not have acknowledged the possessor as God, but it was as a presence, a foreign presence, a law, authoritative and solemn, resisting him, clashing with his purposes, bidding him toward other objects, and into other directions, and convincing him that obedience would be the only wise, right, happy course. And as he withstood and finally vanquished this counsellor, and sinned, he felt that he was a loser by his victory, and that he had driven from his heart his truest friend.

Do not our daily experiences attest this fact of a Divine presence? How suddenly and powerfully are we affected by thoughts, by resolves, to be ac-

counted for by no laws of association, but in their influences and results, if we heed them, fruitful of the purest joy. How are outward scenes and circumstances, changes, disappointments, &c., made to awaken feelings and enkindle desires whose end is blessedness. If the tempter urge us to a base or a wicked action, to dissembling and corrupting words, to impure or selfish imaginations, there is a protest heard from the monitor within, which reminds us of our allegiance to honor, chastity, disinterestedness, candor, uprightness; or more strongly, and all in one of our allegiance to the law of God. And when we deliberate between the wrong and the right, such sweet encouragements are made to surround the latter, such blessings wait to crown our sinless decision, that Heaven seems to open itself with visible inducements to us to determine in the fear of the Lord. In short, it is manifestly the desire and interest of God, so to speak, that we should cleave to *Him*. So he guards and warns and admonishes and afflicts and allures, that we may be persuaded into righteousness.

Now this is the sublimest and most moving fact of life; it is the glory of the poor, infirm creature; and if we fully realized it, it would signally aid us to do that great thing which the Apostle enjoins, namely, work out our own salvation.

For what can more effectually inspire us to turn with faith and love to another, than the knowledge that he is pouring out his affection upon us, and encircling us with his helps? Let a son forsake his father's house, and wander in strange lands, and sur-

round himself with loose associates, and every hour transgress the sacred precepts and violate the most ardent wishes of that father; yet suppose evidences, all along the wanderer's path, continually presenting themselves, of regard, anxiety, and watchfulness on the part of the neglected parent, — a letter here, a message by a friend there, a book in one place, a portrait in another, and so on. If the sense of this entreating love, this unselfish care, this warning oversight, *do* seize upon that thoughtless young man's heart, will it not be likely to subdue him, and bring him to his father's feet again? It must have its effect whenever felt.

Just as distinctly is God hanging up within the chambers of your hearts, and scattering along the path of your affections, the tokens of his gracious desire for your return to his house. It is not possible for him to *compel* your return. Your moral constitution admits *persuasion* only. But what forebodings, what compunctions, what hesitations, marking the path of evil on the one hand; what deep satisfactions, what kindling thoughts of holy things, what unutterable exultations, crowding the way of obedience on the other, go to make up that persuasion.

I can conceive that a sense of abandonment by God, of being left entirely to one's own moral way, as if there were no care what sins, what miseries the wayward soul were heaping up for itself, might make the transgressor reckless, might awaken a vindictive perseverance in evil, or might dull the spirit to everything except a sense of resistless fate. But what obligations which a thousand lives could not

fulfil, which stoniest natures can alone deny, bind *us*, the ever watched, entreated children of God, to adore Him in faith and obedience, and to work out that salvation to which He inspires us.

2. Again; this fact of an inworking God goes further than merely to encourage with a sense of interest and care on the part of the Deity. It offers the still more effective encouragement of direct *aid* to our spiritual effort. God not only *dwells* with us inwardly, but he works with us constantly. He is not an idle observer, but an active co-laborer.

Let us turn back to our days of childhood. Can we not remember how large and discouraging certain tasks appeared to us, until the friendly hand of the parent made the burden light, — not by lifting it so that it should not press, but by the electric touch of its sympathy, and by its presence there to steady us if we staggered, and to relieve us of the weight if it threatened to *overtask* our powers. Do we not re-experience, in the effect of our assurances of aid upon our *own* children, the blessed power of faith in a helper?

Is there not, then, for you who would forsake your sins and work out your salvation, the most abundant encouragement? True, you approach the effort in full sight of your numberless infirmities. You cannot fail to recall, too, many endeavors that have ended in disappointment. It seems a mountain-height, a steep acclivity; and you have but weak and uncertain limbs for the climbing. But — and all is as nothing before this consideration — it is not you, but God that will do the work, swelling

your mortal sinews with heavenly strength, and giving his angels charge, that you dash not your foot against a stone. O, work of sorrow and exhaustion, and final failure, if dependent only on human purposes! but work of joy, and ever-freshening energy, and of cumulative success, if performed in the faith of a *helping God!*

3. There is still another direction in which the encouragement presented by the text may be viewed.

Every person who seriously sets about the work of religion has anxiety to know the quality of acts and inward states which would naturally be presumed to enter into that work. As theologies run, this is not the easiest task. Many a one has been startled to be told, that efforts which he was humbly making toward a Christian life were worse than profitless,—that they indicated only a reliance on personal, earthly instrumentalities for salvation; which must inevitably remove him who employed them farther from God,—that certain interpretations of Scripture, particular views of Christ, and so forth, were indispensable to safe exertions in behalf of spiritual deliverance.

The text sheds all the light on this point that can be needed; and, by scattering doubts, throws open a happy path for spiritual effort. It teaches the soul to despise no emotion, no conviction, no purpose, no act, no toil; whose end is the purification of the heart,—the fulfilling of the Gospel law of love,—a nearer communion with Christ,—a living faith in God. The text renders presumption and self-trust impossible. While it stamps *true religious* efforts



as of divine quality, it refers the source of that quality, not to the human agent, but to the co-working Deity within. It assures the meek laborer for the meat that perisheth not (though in the face of a thousand creeds) that the labors which he calls *his own* are yet God's,—that the way which he himself, through his faith and prayers and watchings and self-denials, seems to have opened for his progress, is yet the path which the Holy Spirit has marked and prepared for him; and that the salvation which his endeavors would seem to be successfully working out is but a blessedness offered by Infinite Grace and achieved by a heavenly Power.

But it is time to turn to the first clause of the text,—to the duty enjoined in view of the encouragements presented. That duty is the “working out of your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

Without doubt, mysterious are the processes of the soul,—mysterious the relation which God sustains to it. Here we are enjoined to work out our own salvation and we feel that every work, religious or otherwise, *is* our own,—yet are we assured that that very work is God's, and we feel,—yes, our whole souls bear witness to the fact,—that it *is* God's. Let this tremendous mystery pass,—we cannot fathom it. There is a practical truth here which we *can* fathom, and closely does it press upon each of us.

The whole responsibility of our salvation is thrown directly upon ourselves. The appeal is to our own determinations, to our own anxious, assiduous, and persistent toil in the religious life. In short, we are

called upon to WORK OUT *into salvation* the elements which God has first created within us. There is no salvation for us, except it be this of God's preparing; yet all this divine preparation is not *salvation*, except it be diligently and tremblingly *worked out* by ourselves. God throws open the prison-doors, — our deliverance lies in our own going forth. God paints on the soul the image of righteousness, — sanctity is the solid sculpturing of the inner type, into the marble of purpose, habit, action, life. God fills the heart with persuasions, salvation is the practical conversion of these into convictions, which may rule and hallow the soul. No man is an inventor through whose thought the *plan* of a supposed invention merely has passed. In the model it may a hundred times fail. So no aspiration, and no supposed inspiration (though embodied, it should prove to be the very tracing and breath of God), is of any moment, *unless* embodied. And to be embodied, it must harden into Gospel substance, — a substance heard in words, seen in deeds, manifest in feelings; the very pith and marrow of daily, hourly practice. This is what is meant by "*working out* one's own salvation." It is like any other work in its draft upon the energies and devotion of the being; only transcending all other toils, as it exceeds all other interests, in the solemnity and duration of its issues.

1. Therefore as a first specific suggestion, you may not wisely trust for salvation to any sentiment or theory, or gushing impulse, or chivalric imagination. If the flaming up of a genuine divine fire within you will not of itself save you, surely these

earthly glows, these flashes from lower lights, will not do that service. Sunshine and rain, both from the sacred sky of grace above us, indispensable to the life of the soul, will yet not start a single nutritive germ into growing, unless the *practical energy of the man*, the *out-working* culture of the man, do its full, necessary part. The sunshine and the rain are blessings indeed, if, like resolute and prudent husbandmen, you labor for these practical ingatherings of faith; but give heed lest you convert these mighty helpers into the very sources of your spiritual sterility, by trusting, like indolent gleaners, to the products which they call into spontaneous activity.

2. Again, it is not *working* out your salvation to confide your spiritual interests to one who preaches to you and prays with you upon the Lord's days. If God himself, working within you, cannot save you, except you yourself work, surely *man* has no power to save you. You are not fettered by the grosser forms of superstition, yet you may not be wholly free from the senseless trust which is the *soul* of superstition. When sickness, or death, or sorrow, is in your dwelling, you give your pastor peculiar welcome. It is well. A brother's real sympathy, and his ready offices, are grateful to the suffering spirit; but you are none the nearer heaven that he is at your side. And in the funeral hour, saving that the customs and decencies of society are better observed by his presence, it is no better for you and yours, that he raises *his* voice in supplication. Just so far as he helps you to open *your* soul before God, — just so far as by leaning on him, you are gaining

strength to walk *alone*, his companionship is precious. His highest function, his best success in whatever circumstances, is through his sympathies and suggestions, to lead you to that personal labor whose end is salvation.

A distinguished criminal, lately executed in Europe, was informed that he had but a few hours to live, and that he had better attend to the affairs of his soul. "Ah! that is the priest's concern," answered he. From this reply we infer that he had the blind faith of the Romanist. But there is something of the spirit, the practical working of this faith throughout Christendom. It has some sway where least suspected, though in forms less irrational than this. But, by the terms of this text, we see that though Christ, "the Lord from heaven," were minister at an earthly altar, he could only *help* men to "work out their own salvation." *His* purity could not bear *their* sins, nor could *his* faith be *their* justification.

What is termed Sabbath-day religion, an occasional putting on of devout habits, is a gross species of this faith in a vicarious agency, as if the sanctuary and its forms, the Bible with its words, the day with its usages, could *confer* salvation, — could throw immortal blessedness, like a robe, over unwilling and indifferent souls.

3. But there is another point upon which I would speak. The whole spirit of the text is violated, by a certain relation, which the soul is sometimes urged to sustain to Christ, — yes, even to Christ. In this relation there is (speaking in general terms) no

“working out” a salvation. It is a relation, first, of superstition, founded upon faith in the priestly function; next, it is equivalent to a salvation sought by inward emotion, not by vital sanctity, by practical righteousness. Still further, it is as a salvation hoped for, through an external, vicarious agency. *All* the fallacies of religious method, the foolish, human expedients to furnish a *substitute* for sober “*work*” of the soul are concentrated in this relation to Christ.

There was lately held up to us the mental condition and the language of a prisoner of a neighboring city, soon to pass from the cell to the gallows, — one, who certainly had been a deliberate, merciless villain, — and we were bidden to rejoice in the demonstrations of a regenerated heart; in the saving relation established between the criminal and his Lord. Here was an example of a leaning of belief toward the unapostolic way of salvation of which I have spoken. And when I read the further statement, that that prisoner desired *not* to live, — that he would probably refuse a pardon if offered him, because he was eager to be with his Lord, and share his blessedness; — and when it was manifest that this statement, put forth by a minister of the Gospel, was supposed to express the most natural, and the most certain condition of salvation, — the highest and truest relation to Jesus Christ, — I could not repress a sentiment of amazement, not to say horror. It seemed to me as if, under such an interpretation of the soul’s duty, the moral universe were losing its axis of motion and its very orbit around the Deity.

It seemed as if such a belief were tearing away the very foundation-stones of the Eternal's throne. Either St. Paul knew nothing of the stupendous topic upon which he wrote, or a faith like this is a terrible, *terrible* error.

The doctrines of death-bed repentances, of regeneration in mortal perils, of deliverance through spiritual convulsions, of heaven taken by force of passions that rarely have value on earth, are the fruits of this faith. It disparages a serene life of trust, patience, and duty; it cares little for the "*working out* of your own salvation."

I admit that regeneration is the result of a *supernatural* force upon and in the soul, and therefore not to be judged as from the premises and sequences of common experience. But even this supernatural force has its limits, its directions, its demands for coöperative energy, its fitness for the life and soul of the believer, and is not to be looked upon as an arbitrary meteor, flashing through God's firmament, falling under no Gospel law, and playing mockery with the whole spiritual system.

Let me say this much in admission, with respect to the case to which I have alluded. If the reputed change of that wretched man were such, as, if he had lived, would have secured earnest and humble efforts after a Christ-like life, then that change was a transformation of soul. That such a change *may* have then occurred, or *might* under similar circumstances occur, I do not deny. But to intimate that such a case is according to the common law of revelation is to set an Egyptian pyramid upon its

apex, and say that so its architect intended it to stand.

But O blessed faith in Christ, as the *living*, daily inspirer of the soul! Who can declare its power, its joy, its immortal fruits!

Finally, "work out your own salvation *with fear and trembling*"; that is to say, with deep and solemn anxiety. And you will do this, when you know the value of a life of sanctity and a death of disciplined faith. In proportion as the magnitude of your spiritual interests falls within your view will you feel an increasing solicitude about this great work, for which you were called into being, and for which an immortality is granted you. That you are so bound to the very spirit of God, in these your labors, will render them august, and surround them with hallowed anxieties; and the earnestness and watchful apprehensions with which the votaries of the world seek their raiment and meat will cause you to reflect whether a similar devotion is not demanded for that "body" which "is more than raiment," and for that "life" which "is more than meat."

## SERMON III.

### FIDELITY IN THE FEW THINGS.

HIS LORD SAID UNTO HIM, "WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT; THOU HAST BEEN FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS, I WILL MAKE THEE RULER OVER MANY THINGS; ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD." — Matthew xxv. 23.

CHRIST came into the world to save the whole family of man. His kingdom must embrace Gentiles and Jews; those from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, — every tongue and kindred and people and nation. The providence of God is every moment over the whole earth and all its inhabitants. This universality of interest, of care, and of grace, is one of the teachings of revelation, is one of the marks of the Fatherhood of the Creator.

Of course all theories, treatises, schemes, that have for their end the well-being of man, take their scope from the Gospel; that is, they look to the benefit of all mankind; and some political economists, making philanthropy the basis of their plans and systems, would adjust them for the benefit of no one people, but for the world at large.

Active reformers often pursue something of this



method. They aim at the good of large communities; they speak to the ear of the multitude; they write for the eye of the million. The man of abounding energy and large sympathies, overleaps his little domestic pale, and seeks to throw his activity into a broader sphere.

Such aims are surely not to be condemned; especially when they spring from the wide charity of the religion of Christ. Every heart ought to entertain them. There are those to whom such a broad and general field of labor is, as it were, their *special* province, — possibly, they could work efficiently within no narrower circle; if so, God meant them for just such work, and just such work for them.

But, ordinarily speaking, the true theory of a safe investment of human labor is, that it should be applied to one point, and within a smaller circle. No human faculty is infinite. Stretched too far, its power is exhausted. The eye that seeks a very wide horizon, sees distinctly neither that which is far off, nor that which is near. We are very feeble creatures; each one of us is an aggregation of infirmities; yet so bound together by a mysterious organism, that acting, each of us in his legitimate sphere, we possess powers of resistance and powers of usefulness. Acting beyond such a sphere, our infirmities seem to be unbound, and to stand singly in their weakness and uselessness in the world's way.

It is a common remark, that men who engage in many schemes fail in all. Seen from a worldly point of view, those are the best prospered who have not scattered their capital or their energies over too

many objects. He has become the richest man, and most securely rich, who acquainted himself with one department of business, adhered to it, gave to it his time and patience and sagacity; shut up his hopes and fears within it, and made sacrifices to it. When he forsook the tried path for a wider area, the single end for a multiplicity of objects, the deep channel in which his energies rolled on with a strong current, for the wide flats over which they spread in feeble waves, he became weak, distracted, and *unprosperous*; and lost, perhaps, all that he had won, in days of more prudent activity.

So has it been with all arts and all professions. A universal genius is rare; but a universal genius, eminent in each of many arts, and many professions, has never existed. The painter, though a being of vivid imagination, has miserably failed, when he has sought to throw his imagination into written poetry. The poet, who has forsaken the epic or the sonnet for the landscape or the portrait, has found his fame perpetuated, despite his attempts with the brush. Modern perfection in the mechanic arts, progress in inventions and sciences, are due to the fact that men are discovering the *limitations* of their faculties, are dividing labor into sections, and are giving to such sections the whole of what was once distributed over the entire field of labor.

We turn now from these general observations to the consideration of our personal moral duty; and it seems to me, that our charge upon the earth is, to be faithful to a *few* things. We may look abroad

upon this world, and especially with a Christian light falling upon the field of vision, we may see many painful objects, many corrupt usages, many social evils, wicked systems and institutions; great curses, lying in the public habit or passions or appetite or ignorance, and we may say, Let us help to do away these things, — let us make an inroad into this dominion of Satan, and rescue some victims from his grasp. Let us read upon these subjects, let us write upon them, let us give money for deliverance from these evils, let us plan and agitate to destroy them, let us imitate the good providence of God, which dispenses its blessings through all zones and over all tribes. But I repeat, again, we are infirm creatures; we cannot take the world in our arms, they are short and weak. The *first* law of our life, the only certainty of doing anything with success, lies in learning our appointed field of duty, in determining what are the few things which God has laid before us as the work of life; then in bending to that work the muscle of the body, the zeal of the heart, and the faith of the soul.

There is nothing in this limitation of industry that encourages the selfish idea. I do not say that we must begin with ourselves, continue with ourselves, end with ourselves, for this would be *faithlessness* to the few things that God gives us. This narrow circle, in which I maintain our chief duties lie, may and must involve thoughtfulness of others, and sacrifice of self. It is only circumscribing the pool, so that you may agitate the waters all the more thoroughly for others' healing. And this high

blessing attends such fidelity in the few things, that, despite your very self, your success here is your most emphatic success abroad and elsewhere.

Still, here is one of ambitious energy, who is disposed to *complain* and say, "The world is given me to plough and sow my seed in, and gather my harvests from; I can do nothing with this little patch of soil." Let me reply to him, "Take your spade in hand, go out upon that little patch of soil, and turn it into a garden, and let your neighbor do so on your right hand, and your neighbor on your left hand, and the whole world will become a garden, blooming with flowers and bending with fruits. There is a peculiar power in working within modest limits. Your industry is an example, your patience and method are contagious, while you do not impair your influence by awakening a sense of intrusion.

Life offers boundless illustrations of this thought. Imagine a state, in which the desire is to realize the highest advantages of a political community. What constitution, however wise and liberal; what civic organization, embracing courts and police; what social methods, in the way of associations and fraternities; what aids and instrumentalities of any form could so perfect such a state, as the assigning to every man his duty, and every woman her duty, and bidding them be faithful to the few things over which they were set? You might constitute all the citizens a committee of vigilance over each other; you might enjoin upon each one to take care that the republic received no detriment; yet you might produce nothing but anarchy and ruin. But you could not make the citizen a

committee of vigilance over himself, and secure his diligence that none around him failed of the blessings which his care and labor could produce, without making a happy community and a perfect state. Indeed, this would be social perfection, almost without a state. The machinery of government in this case would be simply a matter of convenience.

Take any one of the professions, — the legal, for example. Here is a lawyer who has the noblest appreciation of his calling. He reverences law, as the embodiment of the progressive wisdom, and the careful experiment of past and present times. He sees it as that invisible force that guards the order and peace of communities. He sees it as the defence of justice and of liberty. He would spread its power, he would establish it in the reverence of society, he would rescue it from the hands that would discrown it and make it minister to selfish aggrandizement or to cupidity. He would do this for the good-will he bears to the world. What seems to be his duty, with such views? How could he most effectually accomplish his noble end? Not by lecturing on the ethics of jurisprudence; not by a peripatetic crusade against the low motives and mean shifts in legal practice; but by setting the example of his own loyalty to the divinity whose minister he is; by embodying in his life the spirit of that glorious system of which he is a functionary and a representative; by being faithful throughout his whole course, from the filling of the smallest writ to the delivery of the weightiest plea, — to the canons of

uprightness and equity, which the law virtually embodies. Such a man carries sanctity into a court; inspires juries with principle; embarrasses and defeats fraud; shames the disloyal; and circulates something of his own noble purpose through every artery of this great system of justice.

And he does more than this. His position is one of *far-reaching* power. He teaches the community. His fidelity in a *few* things is his rule over *many* things. Every profession is purified by him. Every trade is blessed by him. His life is a better tract than he could write. His integrity and purity are better benefactors of his race than if he went about scattering broadcast the words and deeds of a general philanthropy.

Again, who is the best conservator of probity and of exact justice in dealings between man and man? Who can most faithfully instruct as to the sacredness of property? Who can most effectually weaken the selfish principle in the community? Who, above all others, can establish usages that shall secure prudence and moderation in enterprise, caution in incurring responsibilities, promptness in the discharge of debts, a considerate and liberal spirit in all pecuniary transactions? I answer, the punctual, conscientious, humane merchant. If every merchant, from the heaviest importer to the pettiest retailer, were to labor by the law of exact justice and of kindly accommodation, how would the whole mercantile system become a network of uprightness, and benevolence even, to entangle the fraudulent and the selfish! A single pattern of incorruptible honesty through all

varieties of mercantile intercourse is a constant inspirer of upright intention. It straightens many a path which would be otherwise tortuous. It buttresses many a tottering conscience, and it sends out its influence through buyers or sellers, — sometimes forward, through their methods of traffic, and sometimes backward, into the dealings of the household: Let the young men that serve him as apprentices and clerks find a discipline for their moral natures in the unspoken lessons of his daily scrupulousness; and, instead of becoming familiarized with artifices, whose success is to be their gain, they are taught that gain purchased by such artifices is dishonor and guilt.

In short, practical honesty has no better helper on the earth than such a merchant. Reproaches go forth from him against tricks and shufflings of every sort, and in all callings. While he apparently conveys the necessaries or the luxuries of life from the producer to the consumer, he is in truth also circulating a living sense of justice and of mutual obligation.

The same principle applies to the ministerial profession. He most helps the boundless kingdom of Christ who most faithfully labors in the little province of his own parish. All ecclesiastical organizations, in which pastors of churches might engage; all associative enterprises, for whatever purposes, whether for the spread of doctrine, or the diffusion of practical truth, or relief from infirmity and peril, or deliverance from crime, can accomplish their high ends with less certainty than can the pastors indi-

vidually, by their faithful spiritual ministrations among their own people.

Suppose, for a moment, that every Christian teacher throughout this our land had no other end in view than the spiritual regeneration of the souls under his care, no lateral issues to distract him, no merely sectarian methods or ends to forward, no desire to build up himself or his people except upon the ruins of ungodliness and error, — build them up in the power of a charitable, pure, devout, and self-denying Gospel. Who could tell the result in all the highest graces and the widest triumphs of Christianity?

Providence conveys unmistakable intimations of the direction and sphere of our several duties. Every one is appointed a *few* things for his oversight in life. There is, as we have seen, the special calling of the individual, and there is, moreover, the *home* with which the individual is connected; and still further, there is the individual himself. These are, so to speak, microscopic circles of labor and responsibility; but, taken together, these circles fill out the surface of all human interests, and cover the whole area upon which God's earthly providence falls.

To you, then, whatever be your calling, however, in your own view, humble and limited, however cramping and disagreeable, and poor of recompense; still, make that calling, so long as you are in it, your moral field. *There* are the "few things" over which God has set you stewards. In that calling you may grow inwardly noble, or inwardly mean and selfish; you may fit yourself for holy communings or foul companionship. If no other living creature be inter-



ested in or connected with its vocation (which is not probable), its moral significancy is not thereby destroyed, nor are its moral facilities worthless ; for *you* are connected with it, and *others* are connected with *you* ; and you have a heart to watch over and a soul to save, and so have they.

Occasionally, in the experience of life, instances are met with of such an interpretation of the narrowest and hardest lot as actually transfigures the most repulsive forms of labor, an interpretation as luminous among the common views of toil as is the candle in a dark place. There is no Apostle of the highest charities upon earth, who might not receive inspiration from this lowly faith. "To think," once said, in substance, a poor creature, "that God does not disdain to train up my soul for everlasting life, by means of these my poor cares and hard toils ! Here I can 'do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God,' and here the light of my Saviour shines to help me." And while she thus walked in righteousness, who can tell how far her "little candle threw its beams," how much richer the world was for her goodness and her faith, how much she had helped its dwellers to find the kingdom of God.

But further ; God has connected the most of you with homes. Through these, you are *indissolubly* related to others. Woman, within this sphere lie most of *your* cares and responsibilities. Within this beautiful, this holy sphere ! Are there any of you who ever think that, because your homes are not splendid, therefore they are of inferior quality in the eye of God ? and that, therefore, all that is lovely

and noble and heavenly cannot be developed within them? Has that babe that lies upon your knee the less of a soul than if its parents were crowned monarchs, and its attendants were peers? Does God love it the less? Does he spend his providence upon it the less? Did the Saviour die for it the less? You may be poor, but because of this are you insensible to all the hopes and fears, all the anxieties, all the joys and griefs, that so solemnly and so awfully agitate life? No! there is a comfort or two less among the provisions of your household, there is a luxury or two less to satisfy your artificial desires, there is a spangle or two less upon your garments, to feed your vanity, — but your moral texture is as rich a velvet in the sight of God as is the tissue of a royal soul; and his angels have as earnest a charge concerning you as concerning the rulers of empire.

The round of your cares is wearisome. Some of these cares seem petty and purely mechanical; and as a mere matter of discrimination, you may call them drudgery. But I say first, if these duties are necessary, and must be done by *you*, let them not be annoying through your querulousness, nor dull because you will not seek to read their meaning. They will find even *beauty* from the light of the Gospel. Think of them, as a part of the training-service of your tempers, of your contentment, and of your faith. This earth needs every pebble upon its surface, to keep its balance in its great path around the sun. So God has ordained for our souls these small cares, to keep them true to their orbit around himself.

And with respect to these trifling or unattractive duties, I say, secondly, that they are interlaced with so much of higher import, that they are really less than the woof of domestic life; the warp of the tender relations and the vital responsibilities remains. While your hands do these things, your hearts may nourish the affections of the wife or the mother, the sister or the daughter or the friend; and if it become a principle and a purpose with you, you may, in most cases, make these high relations lighten and diversify and consecrate all lower necessities.

And here let me say, that I have no disposition to consider the burden of home cares as falling exclusively upon you. Home seems to me peculiarly woman's empire, an empire which probably neither conventions, nor even statutes granting equality of civil and political rights, will ever seriously shake, — but to a certain extent, an extent of kindness of sympathy, counsel, self-control, of measurable participation, *man* must lighten the home burdens of the woman. They are his burdens also, — he is accountable for the way they are borne. He should not be an appendage to the home, but a main branch of its trunk. Its whole interests should circulate through his pulses, and whatever withers its happiness should make his spirits droop.

Were we all but faithful to the "few things" gathered up within our homes, — faithful in the training of our children, — faithful in our shows of mutual consideration and kindness, — faithful in our example of good temper and self-restriction, — faith-

ful in the discharge of recurrent tasks, faithful to the religious obligations enfolded with such beauty and power within this sheltered circle; how could we rule this great earth in virtue, how would each household thus offer to the Saviour a place wherein to lay his head, and a province wherein to reign.

Finally, all the suggestions of this discourse culminate in their application to the individual. As "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," so is the securing personal righteousness the fountain whence all directions of goodness flow. You have felt it to be vanity itself to hope for any adequate fulfilment of domestic relations, or for any sufficient fidelity to the opportunities and claims of any vocation, unless you yourselves have first come into personal relations with God, as the purifier of the heart, and the strengthener of our infirmities. It is not that you should seek to do all these things as if thereby to merit his approval,—but it is, that you must *first* dwell as in his presence, lay your infirmities at his feet; see and feel your sinfulness, pray to be kept alive by his grace, and guided every instant by his holy spirit, in order that you may thereafter be faithful to the things over which he appoints you, whether of your home, or of your vocation. All success is centred in this first attitude before God. You as much need the daily prayer to nourish your various purposes of fidelity as your bodies need the daily meal to sustain your physical functions. And to bring you into this attitude, Christ shows you his everlasting truths, portrays your des-

tiny, and reveals the law of a just God, and the grace of a benignant God; and seals his teachings and his love, — a Father's teachings and a Father's love, "by his own most precious blood."

## S E R M O N I V .

### THE CHRISTS OF THE WORLD.

CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY.—Colossians i. 27.

A LITERAL interpretation of the text is evidently impossible. Nor do I suppose it involves a literal interpretation in any mysterious sense, further than all faith, all divine influences are mysterious.

By common Hebrew idiom, the teacher is put for the thing taught. And some will maintain that in the text Christ is put for Christian, doctrine for the Gospel. And can you doubt that, with such a substitution, the Apostle's premises would be substantially occupied, and his conclusions would be substantially reached? For, let any one of you possess, — have within you, — Christianity, this divine, eternal root of sanctity and blessedness, and would you have no hope of glory? would not glory beam through every chamber of your soul? would not the bliss of heaven fill your heart?

Yet this interpretation does not seem to exhaust the whole signification of the clause. The analogy of other expressions used by Paul justifies, perhaps requires, a less abstract rendering of the text.

It is to be borne in mind that Christianity as a system is in fact but an aggregate of the precepts revolving around the person of their author. If you speak of Plato's *teachings*, or of Aristotle's, or of Swedenborg's, you have the whole matter before you. You may forget, and generally *do* forget, the philosophers who promulged those systems. But you cannot separate Christ from Christianity. Christianity is a sort of function of Christ. It is, as it were, the attributes of Jesus of Nazareth. The mind has a constant attraction away from the precepts uttered to their glorious embodiment in the Son of God, away from the mute record to the speaking life. You cannot dissociate the petal from its hue, the flame from its heat, — so I have always felt the impossibility of dissevering Jesus of Nazareth from his Gospel.

And so Paul manifestly felt, and wrote correspondingly. Therefore, to the power of mere precept, uttered and recorded, which we may admit Christianity to be, we must add the perpetual action of the Author of Christianity on our souls, as it were the influence of a personal presence, — the living into ourselves of his own being.

I have now presented, as I think, the Apostle's meaning. The "hope of glory" depends upon a right reception of Christ, as the incarnation of the Gospel system, as (through the medium of his personal being) the living outflow of its divine characteristics.

Instead, however, of what I have termed the "right reception of Christ," as necessary to this

great end, I will, for the purposes of this discourse, employ the phrase, the reception of the right Christ.

But, is Christ divided? Not by himself, but the world and the Church divide him. The true light of the sun is the unresolved, unobstructed white beam; not prismatic hues, not rays, passing through mists or dust or colored media. So there is but one Christ, whom a dissentient world has presented under antagonistic forms. And perhaps the saddest fact that can be discovered with respect to the many Christs that have been adopted as leaders of opinion is, that, unlike the prismatic rays which, united, constitute the solar beam, the several Christs conjoined cannot make the Lord from heaven.

Who, then, are these various Christs, supposed by those who adopt them to be to each respectively the "hope of glory"?

I shall call them, for convenience' sake, and with no pretension to philosophic accuracy, the *Historic Christ*, the *Dogmatic Christ*, the *Æsthetic Christ*, the *Reformatory Christ*. And I shall finally speak of the *Spiritual Christ* as the *true* Head of the Church, as "the Lord from heaven."

Taking together for an instant, in order to embrace them by a common observation, the *Historic*, the *Dogmatic*, the *Æsthetic*, the *Reformatory* Christs, it may be said that this deficiency pertains to them all. They demand little or none of that higher action of the soul, commonly styled a *religious faith*. They all act horizontally on the mind or heart, as if they stood on an earthly human level. Their attraction is not toward the skies, as the realm of spiritual



truth, and as the home of God. And as the glory of which the Apostle speaks is something above and beyond any terrestrial product, it may be inferred that no one of *these Christs* can be to the soul the hope of *that* glory.

1. Let us first consider the *Historic* Christ.

This form in which Christ so commonly appears is one of the lowest, yet it is one of the most important, and for this reason, that it lies at the bottom of all others, sustains not only the least estimable, but the noblest forms of the Christ. Just as you might say of a tower, strong, yet low, on which is built the lofty signal that guides mariner and traveller. That tower, of itself, indicates no dangers, and points out no path of safety; yet on it rests firmly the beacon that *does* warn from peril and invite to security.

There is a school of critics who reject the Christ of the Gospel histories, and who, therefore, can receive no other Christ. These found their sceptical conclusions, I presume, on what they deem sufficient evidence. It is not in point to speak at length of these doubters. I allude to them only to say that nominal Christian believers are ready to confront their opinions by an array of learning, or by zealous declarations of an unshaken evangelical faith. Yet of this phalanx of Gospel confessors many are no better *men*, no better *practisers* of Christian morals, than some of those whose convictions they oppose.

In other words, a mere defence of the *Historic Christ* does not make one a Christian, does not entitle him to the "hope of glory," except, perhaps, of a

glory similar in kind — superior, possibly, in quality — to that which Henry the Eighth acquired from Leo for his defence of papacy against Luther.

To be placed in a historic relation to Christ is merely to stand upon an eminence and to say, "I see such and such things." The question is, sight or no sight. The point is, Historic credence or historic doubt. With the exception that the facts to be determined are of superior magnitude to other facts, you might as well agitate the question whether Ignatius wrote all the epistles imputed to him, or whether Phœnician navigators scrawled the hieroglyphics on the Dighton rock.

A man's motive powers, the affections that turn the great wheel of the will, are near the base of the being. They have the foundation-chamber to themselves. Historic teachings are only light let into the front and upper rooms of the feeling, working *man*; and mere light moves nothing. If light be followed by faith, and faith by love, then it is like raising the gate whose lever the light discloses, and letting in, through subterraneous channels, the waters that are to give impulse to the volitions, and set into operation the spiritual machinery.

Probably, you all *receive* the *Historic Christ*. You look with distrust, with something of dread, perhaps, upon one who says, "There was no such Christ as the Gospels represent." But does this, your historic belief, enfold a "hope of glory"? In disputation with a doubter, would the fire of your zeal be the fervor of a heart-faith? Do you derive any appreciable comfort, or any practical guidance, from what

you hold as the Gospel History? Are the Saviour's words vague imaginings, or are they verities, to which your conduct, conversation, desires, destiny, are inseparable, are eternally linked? As your eye notes the rebukes which *he* uttered against sin, do you ever conjecture that he meant *your* sin? Or, do his disclosures of a judgment to come enkindle any sense of peril in your own souls?

I cannot dwell upon this topic longer than to say, When God gives facts for you to credit he expects from you a spirit wherewith to interpret them. The facts without the spirit are like the lyre and the plectrum without a hand to bring them into contact. Or if you seize the facts, to make them give forth any other than their true divine meaning, it is as if you struck the wires of the instrument, not to evoke their harmonies, but to prove that sound may result from vibrations of a string.

## 2. We will now look at another Christ.

There was a Being of unsullied perfection, of gracious demeanor, of an outflowing love, who once appeared among the tribes of Palestine. His words were a message from God; his life was an embodiment and an illustration of the message. He was simple and direct. There was a heavenly power in his acts and in his presence. There was no mind, docile and devout, that could not understand him; no soul, receptive of his spirit, that did not shine in his beauty and bathe in his peace. Contention, sorrow, and dread shrank from his presence, or in it were beguiled of their stings, and the believing earthly was transfigured into the heavenly.

And there was another being, born of a later age, and in a different region, the offspring of speculation, of philosophy, of the cloister. The sharpness of logic was in his mouth, and fine-edged subtleties were set around his cardinal tenets. He was many-sided in aspect, and changed his form with territory and with time. In Egypt, he wore one appearance, with Clement; in Asia, another, with Theophilus; in Carthage, another, with Tertullian; in Greece, another, with Athenagoras. He was always present at councils to settle opinions for the world. At Nice, he anathematized Arius. At Tyre, he thundered against Athanasius. At Sardica, he severed the Eastern from the Western Churches. At Constantinople, he provided fresh articles of faith, to meet every form of heresy that had arisen since the Nicene decision. And thus he went on, instigating hatreds, persecutions, and schisms.

It was this being who invented the wheel and the thumb-screw. He built the dungeons of the Inquisition, and kindled the fagots of the *Auto da fe*. His letters-patent were confiscatory edicts and decrees of exile. When he spoke, it was to frame a creed; when he acted, it was to execute, in defence of that creed, penal statutes. He alone ever interpreted sternness of conscience and depth of faith as crimes to be expiated by blood. None but him ever made that path of experience, that should be one of earthly quiet and of heavenly peace, a path of endless embarrassment or of crushing sorrow.

It is this grim disturber that has everywhere turned the supernatural grace that heals into the diabolic

power that rends ; that calls down fire from heaven, not as a Pentecostal inspiration, but as a consuming flash. He yet counsels and holds partial rule in the world. He has some sure retreats within the general Church. Now and then he rejoices to seize the crosier, now and then to float in lawn, now and then to fulminate from the pulpit ; now and then he dooms in the tract. Here he rivets bonds around the professor's understanding, and tethers the student's intellect to shrivelled conceptions ; there he sits in the editor's chair, and dispenses perdition to heretics.

Sometimes, at the communion-table, he refuses to entreat his disciples the "body and blood" of the Lord. He denies the name of Christian to blameless and Christ-loving men ; and often withholds the courtesies of life and the responsibilities of distinguished duties from brethren who see not with his eyes and comprehend not with his understanding.

But praise be to God ! this once so formidable adversary hath little else than his ancient *spirit* left, nor this in its ancient measure. The sword has been shivered in his grasp ; the state has disclaimed his remorseless alliance ; and only over petty domains and through inferior instrumentalities does he now seek to exercise authority.

I have not yet named the being who has for so many ages been this chief counsellor, as this chief executor of evil ; but before this you have named him, — the *Dogmatic Christ*.

My hearers, can a hope of glory abound in that

breast which this Christ fills? If so, define that glory.

With respect to the victims of dogmatism everywhere, nature will dictate resistance to intolerance as men, yet grace must prescribe forbearance as Christians. For as the Jews who crucified the Lord knew not what they did, so they who tread with the heel on honest consciences, who seek to trample out convictions by trampling on rights, must surely know not what they do.

Let *us*, then, beware how we embrace the *Dogmatic Christ* for the *true* Christ; for Beelzebub was not more the Messiah's foe than is this false Christ the foe of the genuine Christ. The Saviour said, "For many shall come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' but do not follow them." This is one of those lying Messiahs. And, in fact, he has done more to expel the true Christ from the affections of real believers, and to banish from reflective minds a belief in the Historic Christ, which is at the foundation of all faith, than all other causes united. The combined sin of the world has not so glorified the career of Satan or so obstructed the progress of the Church. Give to every man his liberty of conscience, and to your own conscience give *no liberty*. Overcome error, if you may, by argument; defend and propagate your convictions; but aim at a holier victory than that of mere opinion. God save you from the *Dogmatic Christ*.

3. I come, now, in the third place, to speak of the *Æsthetic Christ*,—the Christ of the ideal faculty.

I suppose it is undeniable that there is a re-

gion round about the heart and conscience that has little to do with either; a sort of midway sphere between the dull solidity of the senses and the ethereal realm of the spirit. It is within these intermediate limits that the Æsthetic Christ seems to dwell. And because he stands above the coarseness of the vulgar taste, and above the level of the grosser vices, he is sometimes thought to possess a religious purity, and to be of divine kindred.

But who needs to be told that worldliness in its corruptest *spirit*, if not in its fouler forms, may be allied with keen sensibilities, with scholarly attainments, with a poetic imagination; all of which may eulogize Christ as a being of beauty, of harmonious development, of theoretical perfections? Who needs to be reminded of the fact, that, early in this century, devout observers noted with pain and alarm the absence among men of letters, everywhere, of a faith in Christ as a religious, spiritual guide, as the Son of God, as a personal Saviour; though with no absence of respect for his historic character, indeed of enthusiasm for the grandeur of his system, and for the grace of his spirit.

This class of believers are connoisseurs in moral proprieties, critics of ethical systems, reviewers of infidel pretensions. Their religion seems to be a compound of intellectual judgments and dainty meditations; it is not a cordial and grateful faith, it is not a downright earnestness of soul. The same kind of æsthetic criticism which is directed toward Christ is exhibited toward the Bible. It is the poetry, the dramatic capabilities, the simplicity of

the Book that they admire; the fire of the Lyrist kindles them, the sacred frenzy of the Prophet awes them; they are charmed with the sententiousness of the Proverbialist, with the pictures of the Gospel biographers. They are stirred by the bold eloquence of the Apostle, they delight in the visions of the Seer of Patmos; but they do not prize *the Book* as the glad tidings of Life, as a fountain of spiritual redemption.

As Romanists, the worship of such believers would consist in admiration of the picturesque groupings and scenic effects of the ceremonial; in homage of Raphael, as a painter of cartoons or Madonnas; of Hayden, as a composer of masses; or in reverence of the genius embodied in mediæval architecture.

In fine, the *Æsthetic Christ* may be compared in its aspects, and its effects, to a palace of ice. It glitters with coruscations of every hue, but it is as cold as a sepulchre; and it is a sepulchre for every *soul* that makes it a dwelling.

4. But we must now bestow some consideration upon the *Reformatory Christ*.

By this designation, I mean to present that conception of Jesus of Nazareth, as a moral reformer, which many hold, and which seems almost to exclude him in any other aspect from recognition.

This class of believers appeals to the life of the Saviour; yet not as a divine radiance so much as an earthly example. They will declare their doubt whether he possesses a spiritual constitution different from or superior to that which is possessed



by you or by me. But they are ready to say, So unexceptionable a code of morals no philosopher ever yet devised; so potent an engine of civil restraint no statesman ever yet conceived; so admirable a system of social amelioration no philanthropist ever yet projected; another so glorious a model for human imitation history nowhere presents.

All these are valuable admissions. That men, acknowledged to be zealous in humane efforts, who welcome *sacrifices* in their paths of compassionate toil, admit that before them all, at unapproachable distance, moves Christ, the great lover of his kind, is a pleasing fact to contemplate; yes! even though they see him in no special relation to God, as one anointed with a holier unction than nature and humanity can confer.

I do not dare to say how much or how little the reception of this Christ can feed the heart of the world; for I cannot separate from the influence which spreads from this centre that which flows imperceptibly, in conjunction with such influence, from the widely-received Christ, as the Divine Son of God.

But I may express the opinion, that, were there only this Christ for the reliance of the world and for the redemption of society, his power, great as it is, would speedily decay; and were it not that some other Christ led the way, this Christ would never have had existence in human recognition.

Herein lies the deadness of portions of the Church, — in benevolent progress and in good works, — that they too readily reject *Christ the Reformer*, and hold

another Christ exclusively. And herein lies the spiritual deadness of many moral livers, that they receive the *Reformatory Christ*, and seek for no other.

To me, it appears that the theology or the Christianity of such believers lacks, say, but one thing; but that is the thing needful. It is the very element that God gave to the message and work of Christ, to distinguish and characterize them; a new element for the recognition of the world, whereby its impotency of faith might be reinforced and its debility of will receive a victorious impulse. I mean the element of an assurance of God's *special and personal help*, for the rescue of his children from their infirmities and their sins.

When I look back through the centuries of distraction and trial, to learn what it is that has upheld the heart of the Church, I see that Church turning for inspiration to no monument commemorating human greatness, to no tablets inscribed with earthly wisdom, but watching, as did the Israelites of old, a column of heavenly fire, — the Shekinah of God, — the living and divine Christ.

And when I have read the records or have noted the manifestations of private experience, I have seen *conversion* not the fruit of the Reformatory Christ, but that "*new creation*," which it is the special and mysterious function of Christ, through his *divine* relations, to achieve.

5. Therefore, lastly, I say, Christ as the soul's Saviour, as its "hope of glory," such as he "had with the Father before the world was," is not the *Historic*,

nor the *Dogmatic*, nor the *Æsthetic*, nor the *Reformatory Christ*; but Christ, the manifestation of God, — Christ, who by displays of heavenly love unlocks the imprisoned affections, and lures them to the skies; who so reveals God's abhorrence for sin, and so depicts its issues, that the heart pauses tremblingly in its path of transgression, and seeks the aid of a super-earthly Helper.

Let us not, then, neglect the study of the *Historic* scenes in which Christ is placed. Let us prize his *teachings*, as doctrines of unspeakable worth. Let us welcome his *example*, as guiding us to practical good. But above all, let us give up our wills to his spiritual control, as "Son of God," as "Lord from Heaven," whereby we shall be "born again unto newness of Life."

## SERMON V.

### VAIN THOUGHTS.

HOW LONG SHALL THY VAIN THOUGHTS LODGE WITHIN THEE?—  
Jeremiah iv. 14.

My present object is to show the importance of a just regulation of the thoughts, and to strengthen your purpose against *vain thoughts*.

The first consideration to which I ask your attention, is this, — vain thoughts sap the strength of character. I do not now particularize the *kind* of *vain* thoughts. The proposition is a general one, — thoughts that are adverse to the open action of the man enfeeble his mental and moral vigor. Vain thoughts may be said to be of this class.

Are you fully aware of the power of action on thought? and of thought thus re-enforced on character? By action, I mean the visible execution of purpose, the carrying out of the conception.

Take an inventor, — how definite become his planings, how proportioned, how effective, as soon as he *embodies* his conception, — sees it in its workings! Some minds may elaborate their designs in thought, but they are imperfect; something needs adjustment,

which a material representation, a working model, will alone supply. This renders the obscure conception clear, furnishes stimulus to the inventive power, and makes the practical mechanic or architect.

Take extempore speaking. It is one thing to be able in one's study to elaborate a speech, and it is another thing to look an audience in the face, and command the power of utterance of connected thought of persuasive illustration. And no man can make a free and impressive extempore orator who is not trained for success on the platform of actual speech. A daguerreotype of his address, in its outlines and details of conception, might exhibit exact logic and faultless rhetoric, but its author, for all this, might fail of effect in attempting to render his conceptions orally; indeed, the product itself, unless moulded by the tact and fired by the electric ardor which habits of public speaking beget, would be probably deficient as a spoken address.

Many a man's thought has been shaken as from a stupor, and his purpose matured as by miracle, by some sudden emergency in which he has acted with decision. The very pigmy in moral force has become a giant, by measuring his stimulated powers against some formidable circumstance. Warriors have sprung full-grown and full-armed from the brain of an exigency. Genius has been enkindled by sparks struck out by the friction of necessity.

All theories, all school-rules, all abstract principles, are brought to the test in action, and are exploded or are substantiated in the experiment. Practice is the

great *expurgator* of *vain* thinking, and it is the great *attestor* of *sound* thinking.

It is *action*, then, in general terms, that gives life, force, exactness, to thought. The scholar must *write*, the artist must *paint*, the clerk must plunge into the mysteries of entries and balances, the mechanic must ply his tools, the advocate must *plead*, the physician prescribe at the bed-side, the minister *preach*. Every laborer, whether of head or hand, must work his thought or knowledge into *action*, before he is wise, or skilful, or efficient.

I need not show specifically the effect of thought reinforced by action on character. If I have left the impression on your minds that action is all-potent to modify and invigorate thought, you will see at once the effect of both on the character of the man; or rather, you will see that *both do constitute* the man. From a schemer, he becomes the practical inventor; from the dainty theorist, he becomes the sound philosopher; from the man of dreams, he becomes the man of force, dexterity, accomplishment.

Nor does the proposition halt, when, instead of estimating the influence of action on intellectual thought and character, or on manual dexterity, you consider it with relation to moral qualities.

A person of impure imaginations is a polluted creature and a dangerous companion; but he is far this side of the line of vice which the practical profligate occupies. He is on the track, indeed, toward signal achievements in iniquity; but taking him as he is now, a sensualist in thought only, and comparing him with the systematic, habitual debauchee,

he is a tyro in unholy living. He has not the force of the overt transgressor; he has not the hardihood, the almost irreclaimable tendencies of the practised libertine. Desire that yearns, though hesitates, in the one, is the purpose that plans and executes in the other.

There are some individuals as *bad* as passive, timid baseness can make them; but their viciousness is less defined, less peremptory, less diffusive, than that of the actively corrupt.

I do not say that, comparing the two classes of wicked men with the Christian standard, there is much difference in radical sinfulness, but only that the characteristics of the vice of each greatly differ.

Force of character, then, development, depends upon thought reinforced by action, or upon a correspondence between the practice and the meditation of a man.

Now *vain* thoughts generally run counter to one's actions. The inward life and the outward life do not harmonize. The man is therefore comparatively an imbecile. Your *dreamers* are never men of power, — air-castle builders never build granite palaces. Reveries are the deadliest foes to achievements. Pictures of the imagination hardly more resemble daily realities, the substance of life, than the mirage does the solid earth or the rolling sea; and they who habitually contemplate these mental images bear about the same relation to men who observe, handle, act, that the morning vapor bears to the beating rain.

At the very outset, then, the man or woman who cherishes vain thoughts, shrivels those productive

energies which God gave for duty and for his service, — they stint their immortal stature.

But again, not only do *vain thoughts* rob the being of its momentum, by causing thought and action to draw oppositely, but they enfeeble it, simply on the principle that what is *false* must enervate. Now vain thoughts are obviously false thoughts. They come short of the truth, or they go beyond the truth. Experience never realizes these fancies. There is no *strength* but in truth. Is it the dreamer who is adequate to the emergencies of life? Is it he who measures wisely its trials? He who calculates accurately its claims? He who is contented with its allotments? He who is cheerful under its disasters? No. The vain thinker brings all things, all beings, not excepting the Infinite Controller himself to the bar of an idea; and this idea being a false one, he pronounces, practically, if not formally, a *judgment* on the world, men, life, and on the Supreme Disposer.

The vain thinker, shut up with his fancies, bereft of the ventilation of sound thoughts, little realizes the moral weakness he inhales with that tainted air. He is in a sphere of illusions; consequently, he views none of life's indispensable discipline; he enjoys none of its healthy privileges; he accumulates no reserved force for sterner and inevitable realities.

Under this division of my subject, I will add but one other consideration to the two already submitted, — why vain thoughts should be controlled.

I have said they weaken, by dividing the forces of man, the meditative from the executive. They delude, and so enfeeble, by surrounding the being with



falsehoods; and thirdly, they directly debauch by their intrinsic corruption. *Vain thoughts* are vicious thoughts. An evil idea *may* pass across the mind, and leave no blur, but such ideas cannot *lodge within* the mind for any length of time without staining it. These suggestions enter the field of consciousness, and if the heart invite them to remain, they *will* remain, and that which was the result of human *infirmity* becomes a testimony to human *guilt*. The *discarded* conception would not dishonor an angel, — the *cherished* image is shame and corruption to the man.

I believe God grants the power to man to resist the Devil; but it must be on even ground, and before odds are given to the foe. Thoughts are the successive steps by which the great Enemy seeks to win us down to his realm. So long as we stand away from the edge of the pit, on the solid footing of early and sturdy resistance, God gives us the victory; but if we descend a single step, the adversary has us at advantage. We seem yet to be above and away from the perilous edge, because our eyes, in their higher level, discern the beauty we have not utterly forsaken, rather than the evil that yawns at our feet. We take a second step and a third with equal complacency. The gradations are easy, but sure; and at any instant we may lose sight of all the forms of virtue, and find ourselves in the terrible grasp of the fiend.

It is in view of the facts now presented that the Scripture so urges purity within. It is the *thought* that is brought into the Eternal Presence. It is

*thought* that participates in heavenly bliss. It is *thought* that suffers retributive woe.

But I will classify our vain thoughts, that our heed with respect to them may be increased.

Take first the vagabond class, — the idlers, beggars, vagrants of the mind, without avocation, without home, without aim. As well might you expect a town to thrive whose population consisted of strollers, unsettled in habits, without ambition, without energy; coming without purpose, and going without object; as a *mind* to prosper, a character to flourish, through which ideas wander without control: pursuing no end as busy and patient citizens of the mental state, but only staring at sights, and roaming as impulse or chance directs. As well expect the wind to waft timbers, shingles, boards, into a compact building, as to hope that such random ideas will ever adjust themselves into a solid mental edifice. As well hope that the colt that never knew bit or halter will plough up your farm or draw your harvests to market, as that unregulated thought will stir up the intellectual glebe to fertile action, or convey any product worth keeping into the mental granary.

Nor is all this true only of mind. It is true also of the heart. The *moral* product is affected like the intellectual. Collapses of character, failures in plans, defeats in life, wretched issues out of fair beginnings, are to be accounted for on the ground of unmethodical and capricious thought.

Again, take the painted, bejewelled class of thoughts, all taste, all beauty, all comfort, all honor, all joy; the pleasure-seekers, the elegant schemers,

the dainty gentlefolk of the mind. As well expect in a town mouths to be fed and backs clothed, the ring of the hammer and the whiz of the lathe, the prosperity of universal industry, the content of just recompense, the sound judgment that rules the present, the forecast that provides for the future, where fops and belles (whose sole aim is to avoid care, to shine and enjoy, to escape wrinkles and cheat fate) are the only agents, as to expect the performance of duty, the right reading of life, the true discernment of moral and spiritual relations, — love toward man, and trust in God, — from those who cherish extravagant fancies, who welcome none but rosy images, hope unattainable bliss, and dream impossible achievements.

The mind that would breathe a true atmosphere must enter the realm of tempests as well as of calm, — must snuff discipline beneath skies streaked with lightning and pealing with thunders, as well as beneath clouds of gold or a canopy of azure.

God tries with adversity as well as with prosperity, and it is through *that* door, rather than *this*, that the Gospel child must enter the kingdom of God. That pictured lot, which would probably be your ruin on earth, will not qualify you for heaven.

But still again. There is a class of *vain thoughts* that may be called the gloomy, the desponding. These answer to the discomfited, the hopeless dwellers of a town, who *do* nothing; who repine at everything, who prophesy disaster, who mope, who accuse the world, who are faithless in God; the social ravens, ready to pick up another man's morsel, ceas-

ing to croak only while they devour it. No better citizens of the moral and spiritual realm are these dark imaginings, than are those selfish malcontents of the social world.

How unlovely, how profane, is this morose habit of mind! How unworthy the protected and loved child of God! Be sedate, be *solemn*, if you will; for life's responsibilities may well make the heart grave and reflective; but be not a brooder. Until you are an outcast from God, never despair.

Akin to this class of "vain thoughts" are those sad memories which bereavement leaves, which have nothing of heaven in them, which are merely oppressive reminiscences. I would not easily chide such, would rather pity the victim of them. Yet they are wrong, and they should be dislodged. Faith is no tenant of that soul that gives itself up to the smitings of sorrow, that yields itself to the dominion of a past calamity. There *are* aspects of death, if we might reach them, marked on the event by the Son of God himself, which should yield high consolation, if not expel *every* gloomy sentiment. It was to meet just such crises of the heart that Jesus of Nazareth came among tried and suffering men.

The last class of *vain thoughts* I shall mention (and hardly more than mention, since I have already alluded to them), is that of the profligates, answering to the revellers, the debauchees of the social domain, — inhabitants that are the drones and scourges of every community. As these have a sad power of corruption over the young of that community, so the thoughts which they symbolize vitiate the germs of

every pure emotion, and train up rioters rather than worshippers.

It is a dreadful habit to give the reins to some greedy appetite or some flushed sentiment, and let them whirl the soul at will in this chariot of sense. If a man could see *himself* in this wild career of thought, or if this invisible reality could become a visible representation, that others might see it, or if a person might conjecture how in these reveries he appears before the Searcher of hearts, many a one, in shame or disgust or horror, would bring his conscience, his spiritual determinations, to the rescue; and as one violating the sanctity of his being, as one profaning the Temple, wherein God's honor should dwell, would cleanse his breast of its foul imaginings.

You may now be ready to inquire, Where is the remedy for vain and wicked thoughts? I answer, The basis of all successful effort at control over the thoughts is *faith* that they *can* be controlled. Some seem to doubt this. They say, "Demand of us action, and we will respond. Set before us the *deed*, and we will do it; but thought is so subtle, so illusive, that it evades our grasp and defies our sway." Brethren, this is not true. You are led to doubt your jurisdiction over your thoughts, chiefly because you set them in contrast with your deeds. These are admitted to be within man's power, but by a presumptuous inference, those cannot be, because they have no characteristics in common with deeds. You forget that actions, foreborne merely through fear of law or dread of opinion, or any such constraint, are fore-

borne by yourselves only as agents of a foreign force. Wherever you have *truly* controlled action, you have controlled thought. Your *will* is the sentinel that may bolt or may unbar the gates. It is the word of your *purpose*, that will shut out the regal procession or the filthy rabble ; yes, or the saintly throng. Do not doubt ! Have faith in God, and in his everlasting succors ! Call upon his Spirit, and be sure of deliverance !

I will not close without adverting to that surest defence against "vain thoughts," a mind instructed to delight in *sound thought* and a heart impressed to covet *pure thoughts*. Parents, remember this in the early nurture of your children ! There are some foes better conquered by array than by conflict. Such are the appetites out of which sinful suggestions spring. Let Christ abide in the Temple, and the money-changers will not desecrate its courts. Low lusts stand in awe of the *religious spirit*, as the demons quailed before the Son of God. Seek to awaken the love of the *holy*, and the desire of *evil* will perish.

## SERMON VI.

### FORBEARANCE.

FORBEARING ONE ANOTHER. — Colossians iii. 3.

ONE of the marks of the divine origin of Christianity is the inculcation of what have been termed the passive virtues.

Whoever has a merely personal end or an earthly object to accomplish, in the establishment of a system or an institution, seizes for the principles upon which it must rest something that is not too far in advance of his age, and that is not too hostile to the common thought and feeling of man. Contrasted upon this very point, the Bible and the Koran disclose, the one its heavenly, the other its earthly origin. Mahometanism would not have won its quick and broad triumphs, if, like Christianity, its standard had been forbearance.

There is no virtue less natural, so to speak, than forbearance. There is none to desultory effort more difficult of attainment. Indeed, we are hardly in a position to estimate its quality, or the difficulty of its practice, sitting thus, as we do, in the composure of the sanctuary.

It is a virtue that has no existence, except under

circumstances of aggression and moral disturbance. That it is a grace hard of acquisition we begin to feel only when it interferes with our resentments, when it lays its hand upon our passions, and seeks to repress our speech or mould our actions according to the teachings of Christian love.

It is no strange thing, at *this day*, to preach forbearance, to proclaim non-resistant ideas, to hold peace congresses; for these all are the product of Christianity; — though even now, men governed by theories of expediency, and trammelled by the usages of nations, see in these doctrines and projects of Christian philanthropy something visionary and absurd.

But how must it have been in a heathen age? How repulsive to its customs and directions of feeling an inculcation of forbearance, as a *foundation principle* of a new system of religious faith and of worldly practice.

To the Jews, also, a people that had received limited revelations, even from God, the doctrine of forbearance was eminently unpalatable. That Christ should have proclaimed it, I might almost say, as the life of his religious system; and that he should have lived out its utmost beauty and power, and should have required its expression in the life of every disciple, is a mark of the superhuman source of his revelations.

And yet, though the embodiment of this doctrine, as a cardinal principle of the Christian's faith and practice, bespeaks a heavenly origin, we feel how suited the doctrine is to the condition of man. We



can discover its beauty, we can appreciate its purpose, we can discern the consequences of its adoption. We see that it is an attainment thrown before the soul for the effort of its highest faculties.

Perhaps, you say, I am claiming too much for this virtue. True, it is humble, retired, silent. But the *noiseless* forces of Nature are the mightiest, and the unnoticed labors of man are his most exhausting and most productive. So the least conspicuous characteristics of Christianity will be found to exert the most influence upon the development of character and the spread of truth.

As a labor-demanding virtue, forbearance is entitled to the highest consideration, and stands in a position of highest dignity. A charioteer, urging his mettlesome steeds onward upon some errand of mercy, may symbolize an effort of active charity; but the more difficult act of tempering the violence of those steeds, and guiding their activity for the same end of mercy, typifies the higher worth of the grace, forbearance.

The importance of forbearance can be appreciated *only* by a consideration of the consequences involved in a violation of it. I should feel willing to hold the vice of intemperance or the calamity of war in contrast with the violation of forbearance; and I doubt whether the miseries of either of those would weigh as heavily as the aggregate wretchedness from this. Consider the multitude of little streams that flow together to form the great reservoir of such wretchedness. Count the families upon the face of the earth. Each consists of a greater or smaller num-

ber of wills, inclosed within four walls. No two were ever constituted alike. No two were ever affected by circumstances precisely similar. No two ever had exactly the same end in view; yet they must dwell together, and make up the unit of a household. Now glance for an instant at a day's history of those families. Some, the morning sun awakens only to bickering, to mutual resentments; and the night falls only to suspend these painful hostilities. In others, there may be no conflict of blows, none of marked actions, none of loud speech; yet, for all that, there may be a course of painful retaliations, thrusting out invisible stings, and engendering intolerable annoyances.

The history of all these domestic broils, whether between brothers and sisters, husband and wife, or master and servants, is a simple one. They start, generally, from the same little beginning. Grant that there is first an aggressor, the real fire seems to kindle with the retaliatory act or answer. This is the gust that fans the spark into flame. The severer retort then follows, succeeded by the still more angry rejoinder, until that trifling dispute culminates, perhaps, in a fearful contest of passion and blood.

But the little infelicities that spring up in a family like this cannot be recounted. There, they are like thorns among the plays of the children; here, like a bitter sauce at every meal. Again, these mutual repulsions render work sullen and cheerless. They take the heart out of amusement, and make *marriage*, instead of an inclosure of harmonies, a fenced arena of repugnancies.

Then, passing out of the family to other relations in life, — to partnerships, to the relation of buyer and seller, of employer and employee, of neighbors, and so forth, — the same miseries are found to exist, attributable to the same source. And even war itself, with whose dreadful calamities we were about to compare the woes springing out of a contempt for the law of forbearance, is, in the main, a fruit of that very contempt.

What *is* forbearance, — this comforter of society, this helper of our happiness? It is a disposition to claim less than one's due, to forget the sting of injury, in a regard for the well-being of your injurer, a backwardness to fortify one's own position with the armament which nature supplies, a readiness to sacrifice *self*, though justice may not demand the sacrifice, to the claims of love and peace.

The methods of its operation are various; but its primal effect is on the feeling, the sensibility. It stops the mouth from its quick, angry reply. It holds the hand from the retaliatory blow. But more than this, it tranquillizes the threatened agitations of the heart, so that oftentimes the flash that would *involuntarily* leap to the eye is left under the embers below; and the flush of the cheek that signals resentment is folded up like the red banner of a sleeping host.

This beautiful Christian sentiment can never be mistaken for pusillanimity, — never for the indifference of a phlegmatic nature. It has the calmness and the self-possession of power; yet nothing defiant, nothing aggravating. Its ground is peace, its natural language is conciliation.

How almost invariably effective is forbearance in the commencing strife. Forget yourself, your claims, your position of right. For a moment let the sense of injury even sleep, and instead of retorting the sharp word in the same spirit, utter a mild, considerate reply, and see what a result! That little cloud, no bigger than the hand, which a defiant or a combative spirit would have spread over the whole heavens, with its lightnings and thunders, has vanished into mist before this sunshine of your kindly speech. And another beautiful effect of this course is, that your aggressor, through the clear atmosphere which you have dispensed around him, sees, and will probably confess, the wrong he has done you. What you could not have extorted from him by the batteries of your wrath he surrenders to you at the waving of your white flag. To quote the words of a wretched criminal and suicide, yet a man of culture, and of keen insight into life: "Love is strength, and the power of kindness most efficient. With thrust for cut I have fought the world, and been a *loser*, even *when victorious*."

Children, as well as adults, are affected by demonstrations of forbearance. A child once burst into the room where her mother was sitting, exclaiming with delight in her looks and tones, "O mother, come out and see one of the best little girls I ever knew! I was angry with her, and told her I would never speak to her again, and she said, 'Well, then, I will speak to you the oftener'!"

To what an extent would the relation between debtor and creditor be improved by a display of this

virtue. Let him who owes forbear, when the creditor presses him for a just debt; and let him who is owed forbear, when his debtor fails of prompt payment; forbear, I mean, the display of angry feeling and the utterance of harsh words. And how much sooner will the one pay his debt, and how much less oppressive will be the importunity of the other. And when the account is settled between the two, no friendship will have been broken. Let your memories cite *one* instance, in which such a course would probably have averted a most tragic issue.

What multitudes of wretched lawsuits, costly, protracted, vexatious, has the lack of this Christian grace engendered. Immeasurably would it shorten the docket of every court in Christendom, if no case should come within its jurisdiction other than those in which forbearance, upon *one* side at least, had been fully tried. Nor would this result involve the abandonment of claims, or loss of dues, or latitude to shuffling debtors; or in any wise enfeeble the rule of social justice. It would merely not permit the heart to suspect injury where possibly none was intended (a fruitful source of litigation); and it would withdraw from the matter in controversy all collateral aggravations, which are often a more serious bar to agreement than the substance of the controversy itself.

It is a fact, noticeable, and to be lamented, that many who set faces, as of iron, against the abuses of the day, seeking to bring a practical Gospel more closely into contact with the customs and institu-

tions of society, and with the daily life of the individual,—men who are called by some, reformers, by others, radicals,—should apparently possess so little of this grace of forbearance. How much better would it be for themselves, for their cause, to be armed in this persuasive panoply. Why should they seek to add to the obstacles of the truth they bear an opposition, summoned by an impatient and exacting temper? By gentleness, they need abate no jot of earnestness, sacrifice no tithe of their moral force. Forbearance calls upon no man to blench, to surrender a conviction, to dally with falsehood and sin, or their abettors. It does not repress conscience nor faith, nor any high faculty. Its whole action is against the power of self, that springs up to vitiate every conflict, and lighten the weight of the blows struck for truth and humanity.

How signally deficient have theological disputants generally been in this cardinal virtue. Where there has been one Melancthon, there have been fifty Luthers. Where one Fénelon, fifty Knoxes. It is painful to read the controversies of the Reformation; if *Christianity* were alive in them, *civilization* hardly was. We should expect from Henry the Eighth, “Defender of the Faith,” a strain of coarse, almost profane retort; but hardly from such men as Luther and Chancellor More. Whatever be the energy of character, or the depth of conviction, or the sense of wrong, or the determination to uproot abuses, it would seem as if, with these uncompromising qualities, there might be conjoined forbearance, as a part of the indispensable wisdom, as well as the Christian obligation of controversy.

It is delightful to turn from the pages that record the asperities in which Sir Thomas More indulged, as a controversialist, to his conduct before the court which sentenced him to death. Surely he *knew*, and could *practise* upon the Christian precept of forbearance. Said he to the court, after its inhuman and every way unjustifiable sentence: "More have I not to say, my Lords, but that, as St. Paul held the clothes of those who stoned Stephen to death, and as they are now, both saints in heaven, and shall continue there friends for ever; so I verily trust, and shall right heartily pray, that, though your Lordships have here on earth been judges to my condemnation, we may nevertheless, hereafter, cheerfully meet in heaven, in everlasting salvation."

We have reason to deplore the want of this virtue of forbearance in the political controversies of our country. Religion does not indeed suffer from the acrimony of these disputes, as she does from the bitterness of sectarian strife; because the disputants in this latter are, almost without exception, recognized teachers of Christian morals, and professed disciples of the Lord of love. But even political controversy ought in some measure to reflect the Christian civilization, from the midst of which it springs. A sin of our country is, its want of Christian forbearance. In the midst of so much enterprise, so much personal activity, where every individual feels his freedom, his power; where his words have weight in the forming of public sentiment, and his acts still greater weight in the direction of public action,—where self-hood, so to speak, becomes conscious,

and proud, and domineering, — in a community like this (and a community in this country means the government, as well as the people), there is danger that forbearance, public, as well as private, will be among the feeblest of its virtues. The patriot may well tremble at the prophecy which such a fact utters for the future history of his country. Happy will it be for this nation, when it shall find it easy to practise forbearance toward other nations. When it will prefer the fame of being backward to resent (a characteristic its power may well permit), to the glory of being sudden and quick in quarrel.

The culture of this generous spirit in private relations will alone insure its activity in public sentiment and public legislation.

There is a little fountain of this Gospel grace, to which I again allude, to help, if I might, its perpetual flowing. I refer to the *home* culture of forbearance. And, beginning at the very root of the matter, I say that we parents may contribute more largely than any or all others to the supply of this virtue in our households and in the community. We may begin our benefaction with the commencement of parental duty. We must forbear with our children, not be indulgent, not be blind to their faults, not weary in efforts at discipline, not be weak that we may be moral; but we must forbear with them. That is to say, a sense of personal offence at their misconduct, selfish jealousy of the authority of our own laws, must never rise up to inflame our rebukes or to alloy the purity of our discipline. An intelligent love and sympathy for our



children will beget a gentleness of relation, a patience and a self-restraint, all included in the grace, forbearance. Christ vindicated the demonstrations of the spirit of God from the disbelief and sneers of the Jews, but he patiently bore the contumely that was directed to himself. Thus, practising this virtue in our relation as parents, we shall early call it into being in the hearts of our children; and they who have been long trained at home under its genial influences will carry its sweetness into the activities of manhood.

I would help this counsel to forbearance by one specific consideration. It is only with the *living* that you *can* forbear. The dead are equally beyond your anger and your patience. A touching story recently went the round of our journals, of a father who impatiently sent his little son — a noble boy — out of his presence for a violation of a command; refusing to hear any explanation of the disobedience. During the night, a fever developed itself in the lad; he became delirious, and died, — never again recognizing his father. That father would have given worlds to recall his harsh words to the little pleader for his forbearance, — worlds for a lucid interval, in which he might implore his son's forgiveness for his hard, angry sentence. It was not permitted him. Afterward, he learned that the little hero had transgressed through an impulse to save his younger brother from drowning, and that it was his exposure, through this act, that brought upon him the fatal fever. We need not wonder if that father carried to his grave a pang that had gnawed daily at his heart through a long life.

So it may be with any one of us, with respect to child, friend, or even stranger. But oh! may God spare us the bitter necessity of ever remembering, in the presence of the dead, words or acts of unkind or angry haste, — which we cannot recall, for which we can entreat no pardon, and which have gone with their weight of injury behind the veil. What pang, like the consciousness of an irreparable wrong! What accusers, like the voiceless lips of the dead!

A word now, in conclusion, as to our ability to attain this grace. I believe none better rewards vigilance and effort. The biographies of men eminent for their sanctity instruct us to what extent this power of forbearance may grow in the character. The heathen Socrates, with no life of Christ to inspire him, brought a naturally violent temper under restraint, and made his philosophy beautiful by his forbearance. George Washington, constitutionally quick and passionate, achieved many a conquest over man and over circumstances through his prior conquest of himself. John Wesley melted an obstinate servant by the display of meekness and patience. Doubtless, there are many among our acquaintances, whose daily record tells of victories in this field of moral action, which would have been once deemed impossible. If philosophy have ever won the palm in this conflict with selfishness and passion, surely, philosophy, aided by Christian conviction, should be sure of high success. If we have never made the experiment, let us try it, for the sake of the direct blessings which the attainment brings, and for the sake of the aid it renders to other spiritual effort. And

especially may we, who are willing to be called disciples of Christ, seek a virtue that shone so significantly in his life; and without which, as he has in substance declared, we have no part with him.

## SERMON VII.

### THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

JESUS SAID UNTO HER, "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE: HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME, THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE: AND WHOSOEVER LIVETH AND BELIEVETH IN ME, SHALL NEVER DIE." — John xi. 25.

THERE is a depth and solemnity of meaning in this passage which a light glance at it cannot measure. Let us aim to penetrate the purport of this remarkable utterance of Jesus Christ.

Martha had said unto Jesus, "I know that he (Lazarus) shall rise again, in the resurrection at the last day." It was in reply to this saying of Martha, that Jesus spoke the words of the text. Martha's mind was fixed upon the simple physical fact of the rising of the body unto a second life. Her idea did not go beyond that event. It did not question concerning any law, or seek to learn concerning the spirit that might be said to pertain to a resurrection from the dead. It was a barren, material conception. Her heart, bleeding at the death of her brother, wished him back at her side. She would not wait until the great scene of the last resurrection, — she

would have her brother *then*. The substance of Jesus's reply to her was, "Lazarus believed in me, — my spirit dwelt in him; and having such a faith, and such a spirit, he is already risen to life, — nay, more; he has never died, and could never die."

We have been accustomed, perhaps, to interpret the first clause of the text, "I am the resurrection and the life," by itself; regarding it as expressing in words a testimony to immortality elsewhere expressed by *facts* of Christ's life. With respect to this testimony to immortality, we justly affirm, first, that our faith in the doctrine of a future life rests in part upon the declarations of Jesus. His mission was a supernatural one, — his life was a special manifestation of God, — a power beyond human dwelt in him. Knowledge more than earthly illumined him. His connection with the Infinite Source of truths and realities was extraordinary and mysterious. Therefore he had endowment and *authority* to affirm. And as these affirmations declare the undying life of the soul, we incline to believe on the mere authority of him who uttered them; especially since there is nothing in nature or reason or instinct to controvert them, — that the soul *is* immortal.

We, in the second place, justly regard Christ's words in testimony to a future life as emphasized by certain *facts* of his history; such facts especially as the raising of the dead, and his own resurrection. Since these wonderful events were, so to speak, products of Christ's power, or of God's power through him, we may suppose that he did not exclude reference to such products as bearing witness to immor-

tality, when he said, "I am the resurrection and the life." Yet let us not place a wrong estimate upon the testimony which even these stupendous miracles afford. Of themselves they seem to me to teach the doctrine of immortality rather negatively than positively. They meet all our objections to the physical possibility of a resurrection. They show that the decomposition of the body is not the annihilation of the soul. They leave all the inherent energies of the living man unaffected by death. The divine spark that glows within him is not extinguished when the flush fades from his countenance and the light dies out of his eye. The argument of the materialist falls to naught. He says, "Press your thumb upon the mass which we call brain, and the being into whose faculties that brain sent life and intelligence falls a senseless clod." The Gospel miracles tell us that the mortal body is the dwelling of the spirit; and that into whatever ruin the dwelling falls, its tenant survives unharmed.

But the declaration of Christ which we are pondering has a meaning beside either of the two to which I have alluded. "*I am the Resurrection and the Life,*" says Christ. He does *not* say that the raising of Lazarus from the dead will make such a resurrection sure, or that his own rising from the dead will bear witness to the immortal life, but he says, "*I am the Resurrection and the Life*"; that is, his spirit, his purposes, his affections, his aspirations, *the quality and condition of his soul*, are elements of being that cannot perish, are the germ of a life whose limit and end are not the grave. And the

latter part of the text bears out this interpretation of the former clause; for the Saviour declares substantially that this life is communicable. He asserts, as if it were his loftiest prerogative, that he is the Fountain of that life to others. But how? Through faith in him. "He that *believeth* in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." All that Christ here means by *life* is linked to *faith*; a faith, not that looks on and assents and wonders, but a faith that clings to, that loves, that partakes of, that delights in the spirit and affections of the Saviour.

If these suggestions approach the real meaning of the passage under consideration, if they hint at the true solution of the problem, not of *natural*, but of *Gospel* immortality, how far away do they leave the ordinary, dogmatic inculcations of the Church. I will not divert your minds too long by a consideration of these dogmas, but I cannot leave them unmentioned.

The doctrine of Christ, in the text, I hold to be this. It seems to me to admit of no doubt and of no qualification. *It is only by participation in the spiritual elements of Christ's being, that he who is dead can live, and that he who lives shall not die.* And if I may throw in my own comment here, I would say, that it was for this purpose that Christ was sent into the world,—to impart to trusting souls a life which, without him, they could not find. He declares, "As I live by the Father, so shall ye live by me." And how did Christ live by the Father? By losing his own will in the Infinite Will,—

by embosoming his own life in the life of God. Thus he drank of immortality from Him who alone hath it.

How are *we* to live by *Christ*? Solely, by leaning upon his breast, with humble love, so that into our hearts his spirit may pass; that the immortality which filled his soul from the outpouring of the life of God may flow into and around our souls.

But the teachings of much of the prevailing theology, — do they recognize such a necessity for the human soul? Do they find any such basis for salvation? They make Christ nominally, nay, — with how profound an emphasis, — the source of the soul's hope; but do not some of their propositions take a shape that renders such a relation to Christ as the text makes indisputably essential, of subordinate, almost of no consequence? How does, how can a dogma that asserts the indispensableness of a belief in certain propositions concerning Christ's metaphysical nature, or concerning the unfathomable mystery of his union with God, or concerning the nature and direction of the effect which his death exercised upon the possibilities of the divine administration, — how can any such dogma do anything but impair the obligation, chill the desire which a soul must feel toward a reception of the Saviour's spirit? Metaphysics have nothing to do with the pulses of a divine life. A scholastic theology is a bleached, rattling skeleton. Beneath its ribs no heart of practical and transforming faith can beat. "He that liveth and *believeth* IN me, not ABOUT me," says Christ, "shall never die." When the hour of



test shall come to us, it will not catechize us upon the subtleties of doctrine. It will not rank us according to our schools of metaphysical opinions. It will close its eye to the inscription on our intellects; but it will simply lay open our affections, and seek what there is of Christ-like quality in them, and so determine their claim to "the Resurrection and the Life." This faith that seems to be prescribed as the condition of our immortality is a positive conviction of the heart, is a controlling energy of the affections, is a religious, Christian direction of the will.

Here an objection may arise to the present interpretation of Christ's words, that they make immortality conditional. There may seem to you an implication in what has been said that they who do not believe in Christ are not immortal. Does not this doctrine, you inquire, teach the annihilation of the wicked? I might answer, "No matter what it teaches, if it be true." I might say, "Let no philosophical theories, let no theological adjustments, let no consideration for the fate of sinners, let no shrinking of our instincts step forward to disallow a plain statement, or a plain interpretation of a statement of Jesus of Nazareth." I might ask, "Does not the text imply, does it not substantially, unambiguously teach, that he who does not believe in Christ, living, shall die, and dying, shall not live again?" Ponder these often-repeated words, and see if they teach anything else, if they do not prescribe a condition of immortality.

But it does not follow that a simple future existence is made conditional by the words of Christ. It

does not follow that they who have no belief in him are literally to perish, — to be annihilated; for the words *life* and *death* in Scripture have reference rather to conditions of being than to the bare facts of existence or non-existence. Life, — death, they are the contrastive terms for states of the soul. All that is worthy, desirable, blissful, glorious, is involved in the descriptive epithet, *life*. All that is desolate and wretched is signified by the epithet, *death*. Heaven is synonymous with the one; hell with the other. Then immortality, as a Gospel term, does not mean deathlessness, but an everlasting life of peace and joy. And it is less, far less, the intent of Christ to affirm the continuance of being after death, than to show what shall crown that being with blessedness, — than to cheer on all virtue and all faith, by pointing to their awards, — than to gather up the infinite sanctions of a never-ending future to inspire and direct the present. Poor, poor work of Christ, had it been limited to that barren disclosure of a re-aring. Immortal life was not his original revelation, — it was fluttering on the confines of men's belief. The great mass of mankind never credited that the grave folded the soul as well as the body in everlasting decay; but Christ brought this dim fact forward, substantiated it, expounded it, set forth its conditions, sought to make it real; and strove to lodge it, not among the superstitions nor the philosophic theories of the world, but in the consciousness of the believing creature. He would not write it, as upon the wall with a phosphoric gleam, but upon the soul, in letters that should burn as with

fire. It was thus that he "brought *life and immortality to light.*"

What a striking comment are the words of John upon the thought I am urging. "He that *hath* the Son hath life." He in whose heart the spirit of Jesus dwells possesses the inextinguishable elements of felicity now, — of felicity for ever.

It is common in the burial service to say over the dead, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," — or as some translations more strongly render it, "shall not die *eternally.*" With the interpretation which I urge of this passage, it is easy to see what a source of consolation it should be to those who are mourning the departure of the humble-minded and the pious. What does Christ say to you, mourner, concerning that relative or friend whose marble features look upward from that coffin-head? He tells you that the life of that dear one was not inwrought in those tissues of clay, that it did not dwell in the simple animate principle, but that it lay enfolded *in the loving heart*, whose earthly beating has ceased. He tells you the faith which was nurtured in that breast was the germ of unfading blessedness, that there was a life there, hidden with Christ in God, and that, in the midst of all these shows of sadness and admonitions of decay, that life is *still* hid with Christ in God, as it were, disallowing these gloomy demonstrations, chiding your tears, and saying to you, "If you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed in the risen Saviour, believè

that I your friend—an imperfect but an earnest believer in Christ—have been accepted by God's grace into the companionship of the redeemed."

There is no mystery in the condition of immortality which I have presented. I could almost find illustration of the differences of condition that attend faith or faithlessness in Christ, in the common world, setting aside all reference to the presence or absence of a vital Christian principle.

Take two characters out of the circle of daily, practical life. Here is one, courteous and kind-hearted. He thinks of the comforts and wants of others as well as of his own. He is not seeking his own profit to others' damage. He is sensitive to their rights, whether of property, speech, or character. He has sympathies, good counsels, friendly attentions, generous gifts. The world calls him "noble." Men say, "*He has a soul.*"

There is another, hard, cold, calculating, selfish. Nobody warms up in his presence. Nobody catches any generous enthusiasm from his spirit. Rare are the circumstances that draw forth from him self-forgetful sympathies, disinterested services, or that common form of favor,—money. Princely-hearted men loathe such a character,—every eye can note its meanness; observers say, as with a common voice, "*That man has no soul.*"

There is something of truth in this classification of the street. There is something in the one man that suggests growth, immortality; the power, progress, and felicity that belong to a soul,—and there is something in the other man that suggests the

cramping and the withering of all that might be noble and glorious within. That degradation and barrenness of a nature without a soul.

Suppose now you add the Christian element to the former attractive character. In the heart of it you plant a sturdy conscience, written all over with the fear of God. You open within it the fountain of Gospel charities, — you see there a trembling dread of sin, — a mingling of trust and prayerfulness toward God, — a steadfast and grateful faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Then tell me, my brethren, whether the contrast between these two individuals be not as the contrast of light with darkness, — of life with death? Is there not something in *that* character that should seem to say, “it shall live,” — while *this* character should a thousand times perish!

Such is my idea of the meaning of the language of Jesus in the text. Man, in the first birth of the senses and the appetites, lives without belief in Christ. Man, in the second birth of the spirit, lives *with* the belief in the Son of God. The state of the former is a species of death. To man, as a moral and spiritual being, possessing heavenly opportunities, having relation with invisible glories, and endowed to commune with God, it *is* death, — death here and hereafter. The state of the latter is life, — the flowering of all the beautiful sensibilities of the heart, — the fruitage of all practical duties, — the sense of a peace that passeth understanding, and of a joy that cannot decay.

My brethren! it is but a very small item of a wise man's faith, or of a Christian's creed, that the spirit

shall survive death. There is no drier conception in the mind, than that of a natural and necessary immortality merely. What is life, — what is the longest life on earth, apart from its moral condition, — from its experiences of joy or sorrow? It is nothing, — a mere abstraction, — a dream! So immortality is nothing to you, apart from its conditions. You may survive the grave, — you may live *for ever*, and yet *perish*. For, without affections, the root and the fruit of faith in Christ, your life will yet show, if it have not already shown itself, alienated from holy things and holy beings, — dreary, miserable, unblest. And this is precisely the state against which the whole Gospel directs its warnings, and which the sacred teachers designate by the term “*death*”; and out of which God sent his dear Son to deliver us, and for which end that Son died.

It is a delightful testimony to the truth of what has been urged in this discourse, that persons, in proportion to the elevation of their moral natures, in proportion to the nearness of their souls to God, have had awakened within them a faith in, a consciousness of, immortality; as if there were something in goodness, in spiritual life, that not only *cannot die*, but that so *discloses* itself to the soul. Such was the case even among the heathen. Said Socrates to his friends who stood around him after he had drunk the hemlock, “Do you think that the body which you will soon see lying here cold and stiff is myself? *I shall be gone.*” And how is this sense of the supremacy and eternal life of

the soul intensified in the heart of the Christian believer ! O, you cannot *quench his faith* in an existence of endless blessedness ! No philosophies, no sophistries, no dark passages of his life, no examples of scepticism and indifference can put out the light of his trust in God and in his Christ. Living and believing in Jesus, the record is on his *soul* that he shall never *die*.

Are you not then, my hearers, urged by the most solemn necessities of your being, as well as by your highest hopes, to a faith in Jesus Christ ? Can you with indifference anticipate an immortality which, through your practical unbelief in Christ, will be to you, not life, but death ?

Blessed be God for the helps he has given to the faith of his children, — that, as we gaze up to heaven, we may see Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, at the right hand of the Father ! He who burst the doors of the sepulchre by his exaltation into glory reminds us continually of his triumph over the last enemy ; and we feel that, participating in his might through faith, and experiencing the grace of his perpetual intercession, we too shall rise again, — not to an exile of darkness and sorrow, but to a communion of everlasting joy.

## S E R M O N   V I I I .

### FAITHFUL IN LITTLE, FAITHFUL IN MUCH.

HE THAT IS FAITHFUL IN THAT WHICH IS LEAST, IS FAITHFUL ALSO IN MUCH: AND HE THAT IS UNJUST IN THE LEAST, IS UNJUST ALSO IN MUCH. — Luke xvi. 10.

LET me seek to impress upon you the moral and spiritual fact or law here set forth. It is a fact of man's condition, the law of his experiences. The fact or law may be expressed as follows. As a man is in trifling matters, so he is in graver concerns.

You may incline at first to object and say, "Some men take latitude in insignificant transactions, but they are scrupulous in affairs of moment." Perhaps you may make a personal matter of it, and say, "I am conscientious in things of importance, though I may occasionally swerve a little in deeds or dealings of small consequence." Or you may fix your eye on a neighbor, and say, "He is without reproach in his more conspicuous relations and duties, though, it may be, not so rigid in some inferior dealings. There is Mr. A., for example, he pays all his large bills, and is slack only on penny matters. There is Mr. B., he has been an officer of a corporation many years, large sums of money have



passed through his hands. In his accounts he was never behind a minute in time nor a mill in amount. There are charges against his punctuality and integrity in his private pecuniary concerns, but he is, on the whole, an honest and an honorable man." Or of another you may incline to say, "His demeanor is always decorous and humane; he treats me, and he treats all, as a gentleman should; he appears amiable in his family, and men love his companionship. There are, indeed, times (when some favorite purpose is to be gained) when he loses temper, and lets slip some severe words, and some heartless deeds, but, on the whole, he is a valuable neighbor, and a good man."

And the world may appear to you to furnish abundant examples of similar distinctions, so that you are inclined to say, "A man *may* be somewhat slack in obscure departments of conduct, but he is not, therefore, necessarily remiss in all." And as I at first said, your own experience comes up earnestly to fortify this conclusion. You cannot disguise to yourself that you are somewhat loose in some paths of action. That you deliberately come short of full duty in some spheres of minor responsibility; you are too candid to deny this, but as you look at wider departures from what is exactly just, you exclaim with Hazael, "Is thy servant a *dog*, that he should do this thing?" But the world has always found it hard work to doubt a clear Bible doctrine, and it is only the *superficial* glance that inclines to doubt the doctrine of the text.

Mark, then, the distinction to be drawn in the out-

set between the direction of such observations as have just been quoted and the direction towards which the Gospel precept looks. *Those* all discriminate about a man's *actions*, *this* speaks of man's *condition*. Those declare what a man *does*, or what he *does not*; *this* affirms what he *is*, or what he *is not*; and it might be all true, that a man should shun certain deeds of villany, yet be a villain, or perform certain acts required by honesty, yet not be honest.

The Gospel does not deal with such superficial things, such debatable affairs, such possible illusions as mere deeds. It always leaps within the boundary of manual operations to inspect the secret things of the soul. It lays its hand on conscience, establishes itself among the thoughts, the aims, and the motives, and says, "Here is my domain, my judgments, and my sanctions concern this realm alone; if you read the title-page, I decipher the great meaning of the Book itself."

Before you decide, then, as to the truth of the Scripture maxim, that, "he who is faithful or unfaithful in the least, is faithful or unfaithful also in much," you must take a different stand-point from that which has furnished you with opinions.

But before looking from this new ground, let me ask you to prolong your survey in the direction already taken, that is, on the outside of a man's being, and note whether, even *here*, there are not some indications afforded that the Gospel is true.

Have you never seen the development of such inconsistent courses as you have described? There is

an end as well as a beginning, and a middle of such courses. Do you always discern this end, so that it hold in check the judgment which you would form from the beginning and the middle? Have you not seen certain characters which were stainless to the public eye (yet which you knew were lax in hidden directions), by degrees, or suddenly, and without degree, by some deed of flagrant wickedness, come crashing to the ground, in moral ruin? And if you have, you are prepared, in such case, to think that the injustice in the little was also injustice in the much, only the time for the latter *exhibition* had not come.

It is not uncommon for a great peculation to unveil itself all at once; though the dishonesty that rolled up such an amount of turpitude has been silently working for years. The defaulter for a hundred thousand to-day is no more a defaulter than he was twenty years ago, when he first abstracted for his private use from the bank vaults or the public purse. And if your eye could then have seen *all* the deeds of the man, you would not have been inclined to admit that his want of integrity in subordinate matters was cancelled or overborne to the honor of his conscience by his scrupulousness in matters of great account. No! it is no way to judge of a man to inspect his actions, unless you can by such inspection see through the husk to the moral kernel.

Look, then, at the conscience, not at the deed, as the Gospel looks, and see if it be not true that the little will furnish a test for the much.

Here is a man's moral nature, his whole being,

in its relation to duty, to faith, to righteousness, to God brought into collision with some deed (if I may suppose the deed to be something out of the man). Now does it matter, so far as the man is concerned, so far as the result of his collision is concerned, so far as the moral complexion of his surrender or of his resistance is involved, whether the deed be petty or mighty? So far as Adam's moral being was affected by his disobedience, did it matter whether it was the transgression of a decree prohibiting the eating of an apple or the murder of a world? If a sheet of glass be shattered, is it of consequence whether the ruin were affected by a pebble or by a Paixhan ball? Conscience is like the sensitive plant. *Touch* it with sin, and it curls and droops, whether the instrument of contact be a hair or the "mast of some High Admiral." If I have bowed before evil, it is of no account whether the evil lay in a *word* of yours or in the *lifting* of your *finger*, or whether it lay in the environment of a legion of seducers. I have fallen, sin is on my soul, — sin foreseen, sin avoidable. I am not what I was, — I cannot be what I was. What a profound observer says of Truth is predicable of the conscience: "It regards with the same serenity the lightest and the boldest violations of its law. There are some faults *slight* in the sight of *Love*; some errors slight in the estimate of wisdom, but conscience forgives *no* insult and endures *no* stain."

When I hear one saying of another, "He is unfaithful in those little things, but faithful under these great trusts," I am ready to ask, "Can a sunbeam

glance with splendor through mighty oaks, and athwart towering precipices, yet fall as a black shadow on blades of grass and on grains of sand? Can a spring that fills a *goblet* with poisoned waters fill a *reservoir* with healthy waters? So, can one be an honest man before great deeds, yet a dishonest one before small ones?"

In estimating moral condition, it is not *easy* to decide whether one can properly be termed just or unjust, faithful or faithless. A man may fall *once*, but his conscience, strong and in agony, may spring up and reassert itself. In the language of Milton, it may be true, that,

"From this his descent  
Celestial virtues rising will appear,  
More glorious and more dread than from no fall."

You could not say such a man is unjust, or faithless. There are, there will be, lapses with good, with Christian men, for all are covered with mortal infirmities. A just man is now and then *unjust*, a faithful man is now and then faithless; but it is under protest of the conscience, it is under penalties of remorse, it is under a baptism of tears. The soul is still like the eagle, having its eyry on the dizzy peak, and its flight in the upper air, from which it has *stooped* to do a wrong, out of which, in shame and in prayer, it again soars.

Different, altogether, is such a man, from him who transgresses heedlessly or habitually in small things. This one *is* a sinner. His sphere is truly the bog and the ditch, and if he ever breast the sunlight and

the breeze, it is for some end, beside the gratification of the native longings of his spirit. It is a common and it is a true maxim, that a man *is disclosed* in his relation to little things. What he *is*, seen through the microscope of a tiny fact, he *is*, seen through the lens of a signal event or of an entire life. It is the petty annoyances within the domestic inclosure, not the mighty vexations of public station, that reveal the *temper* of man or of woman. It is the disposition to kindness in the familiar circles, and in unobtrusive directions, that betrays the disinterestedness of the heart. The cupidity that hoards the dollars, was the penuriousness that saved the dimes. If a man in these *by-paths* of life show himself *just* and *faithful*, sure it is that he will so show himself on the *high-ways* of life.

When you pass out of the strictly moral sphere, possibly these remarks may admit of some qualification. I have heard of men being careful of their small earnings, and prodigal of larger sums; of their being heedless with respect to the details of their business, but circumspect with regard to its prominent claims; but such cases will, I apprehend, when closely analyzed, fall under the general rule.

Before closing this train of thought, I appeal once more to your individual consciousness. Does not the Gospel declare the whole truth of the matter? Look closely into your supposed scrupulousness with regard to prominent acts; especially if you are conscious of some laxity in your less significant transactions. You may ask yourself, Why does not that unconcernedness in minute affairs extend to affairs

of magnitude? Is it due to *conscience* that this is not the case? Suppose your conscience easily evades the paying of a *small* debt, is it your keen moral sense that pays the *larger* one? Do no other elements creep in to compel such payment, which elements have no affinity with the moral sense? In the latter case, there is a calculation of the consequences to yourself of non-payment of so considerable a sum, the community would brand the neglect, neighbors would withdraw their confidence, social and business facilities would be abridged. You could not endure the public mark of fraud or dishonesty. Or possibly your benevolent impulses might take the side of duty, by suggesting the loss or suffering which your dishonesty on so large a scale would entail on your creditor; — but in such, and in all kindred transactions, is your *conscience* the agent? Does a *conscience* ever argue in this wise, “Here are two duties, *as duties* equally obligatory. I may neglect this one with no moral peril, but that one I am constrained to perform? *Never!* unless as a *dying* speech! But how *constrained*, — by the revived or remaining life of that conscience? No! but by the judgment, by the calculations of prudence, by pride, or by vainglory. Emotions all outside of the moral and spiritual man.

I shall now offer one or two practical inferences from what has been said.

Every man has the criterion of his life hourly before him, and with any disposition to self-inspection, he may suffer from no delusion touching his moral state. It is the fine print of minute and momentary experiences that will teach him the truth,

rather than the coarse block-type of larger and rarer deeds. He has only to scan closely, and to ponder wisely, this page of important disclosure.

Secondly, the sphere of duty, of profitable experience, of discipline, lies immediately about us. God has placed the leaves of vast moral issues directly in our hands. Duty, like the Deity, encompasses us, — we need not feel around, if happily we may find it, for it is near to each one of us.

Some, after reading the biography of Oberlin or of Howard, of Fry or of Tuckerman, might say, O if I only had the sphere and the opportunities of doing *such* good, and in such a way, how devotedly would I labor! Would you so? Has no opportunity of doing a similar good been presented to you the past week, which you have neglected? Are you now in the path of benevolent action, thinking, contriving, counselling, giving, doing, praying for your unhappy fellow-men? Have you, since that biography stirred your aspirations, dried a single tear, relieved a single want, lightened a single burden, dispelled a single prejudice, struck down a single temptation, nerved a single failing heart? What! with such a domain of opportunity about you, have you done little or nothing toward one of these ends? Alas! that you should think it possible (thus shunning the privileges which God crowds into your daily life) that you could toil over the world in pilgrimages, and search out all loathsome forms of suffering, and carry healing to the worst diseases of the soul!

If God had made such ostentatious services *necessary* for the discipline of man, what an outcry there would have been against his administration;



but now that he has made virtue accessible to the very humblest, what indifference to the outspread opportunity! The *bread and water* of mercy and of duty, the soul's common privilege, is disdained, and only the rare viands and exotic fruits of moral service are to be tasted. What strange, and what foolish, and what unworthy creatures we are! we want what we have not, and ought not to have! we condemn what we have, and what alone we need! we excuse neglect of duty, because circumstances do not favor! and when circumstances most favor, we are most remiss in duty! The record against us is a sad one; and nothing short of daily and hourly discharge of incumbent obligations can set any compensatory checks against the list of our transgressions. Nothing but a fresh heart of faith, an outgushing of grateful, free service, a glad availing of Divine opportunities, can give us any favor with Him who holds that record in his hand.

Lastly, it is not single deeds (which, like reservoirs, contain moral stagnation), but it is the flowing current of daily life that finds an outlet in character, and *character alone* has its issue in eternity.

It has been found that no treasury is so effectually replenished as that which gathers in universal penny contributions; so no man can so surely lay up treasure in heaven, as he who sets aside for the holy coffer the Peter-pence of thought, and speech, and deed. O despise not these trivial acts of the soul, because they *are* of the soul! — trivial only in seeming, — of infinite moment in reality. Each one of them has an endless issue, a relation to *Heaven* or to *Hell*.

## SERMON IX.

### THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

AND THE PRAYER OF FAITH SHALL SAVE THE SICK, AND THE LORD SHALL RAISE HIM UP; AND IF HE HAVE COMMITTED SINS, THEY SHALL BE FORGIVEN HIM. — James v. 15.

THE Sacred Writings make use of other terms, equivalent in spirit to this. There is “the *effectual*, fervent prayer”: “I will, therefore, that men pray *without doubting*” (1 Timothy ii. 8). “Whatsoever ye ask in prayer, *believing*, ye shall receive” (Matthew xxi. 22). “Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask *amiss*” (James iv. 3).

Let us aim to ascertain the force and scope of the expression, “The prayer of faith.”

There is nothing mysterious, either in the term prayer or the term faith. Both are words indicating common and familiar experiences of the mind. Though there may be faith without prayer, there cannot be prayer without faith. Evidently, the mind might entertain a deep *conviction* upon a subject, yet the *desires* might not look in that direction, and when there is no desire, there can be no prayer. While, on the other hand, if I do not *believe* in the

possibility of a certain attainment, any supplication which I should make toward that attainment would be only a nominal *prayer*, — or no prayer at all. And, in general, just in proportion to my *doubts* respecting the accomplishment of a coveted object will be the debility and worthlessness of a prayer directed toward that object. Or, perhaps, it would be better to say, just in proportion to absence of conviction (which may more accurately describe that negatively doubting state of the mind), will any petition or request be destitute of the quality of prayer, — be merely a verbal proposition.

It may, perhaps, seem that supplication *may* be made where there is little or no hope of a favorable result. A man says, "I will go and ask him, though I have no expectation of accomplishing anything." If the man be destitute of *all hope* of a successful issue to his request, he will not make it, unless it be for some other end than the direct one involved in the petition, — the gratification of a friend, or his own sense of duty, for example; and when the request is so made, it is only a nominal, a verbal prayer. And if the request should be granted, it would not be an answer to the petitioner's supplication, for no supplication has been made; but a *result*, correspondent with the mere signification of the *terms* of the request.

It will be seen that I do not confine the function of prayer within *religious* limits, that I do not so demonstrate the exercise of mind which it denotes, simply because it is directed to the Supreme Being. Prayer is a general term for a certain inward pro-

cess, experience, and, let it be distinctly apprehended, that which is generally called prayer is only a form under which this immortal state exhibits itself, or a medium through which it makes itself known. The language, the words in which prayer renders itself, are no more the prayer itself than the melody we hear is the breath or the string that occasions it, or than the electric wire is the galvanic current which it transmits. We are so educated, that all thought presents itself to our consciousness in the envelope of words. Whenever the mind ruminates, all its processes are probably carried on by the agency of the symbols with which from infancy it has been familiar. Thus, a deaf mute, who has been taught only *signs*, must make his prayer, and himself apprehend his prayer, in signs; and one whose inward processes have always been associated with the finger alphabet must communicate thought, and must think, through these digital transformations. Let us, then, be careful not to confound prayer, a mental condition, with an artificial adjunct or instrument, whether word, natural sign, or manipulating process.

Let prayer, then, be defined as a mental or moral desire,—as an inward state of craving,—a conscious want, united with a looking for relief. It is thus that every man prays. I can hardly conceive of one who does not so pray,—though some pray continually and fervently, and others intermittingly, and coldly,—but still the world is full of prayer. Man, dependent, needy, a creature of emulation, of ambition, of hope, *must* pray; and the high achieve-

ments of life, its successes, its gratifications, are the fruits of this all-pervading spirit of prayer. The pursuits of men, — the breathless haste and absorbing eagerness of toil, the diversity of plans, the self-sacrifices in behalf of aim and purpose, the meditation and the motion of human thought and human energy are but the world's prayers. But there is another *name* for these prayers, — *effort*.

Effort is the very maturity of prayer; it is "the prayer of *faith*." Hence the world's prayers are effectual. Effort is purpose in action, but at the bottom of this is conviction, — faith; there would be no action, no effort, without a confidence in the object toward which it was to be exerted, and a trust in the means to be employed in the attainment of that object. If you could impair this fundamental faith, or conviction, you would, in just that proportion, diminish the world's efforts; in other words, its prayers. If it had only *hopes* toward a successful issue, its action would be sluggish and vascillating; but *now* it knows, not thinks, it probable; it is assured, not hopes, that such or such ends are attainable by such and such an instrumentality, that is, it has faith; and possessing beforehand the want, the yearning, the ground, the "effectual" prayers spring forth of necessity, and life presents us the sublime picture of cheerful, confident, triumphant *action*.

Individual history is a complete illustration of these truths.

I have said that every man is more or less a praying man, and just in proportion as his prayers are fervent will be the success of his purposes; which is

but asserting, that, just in proportion as his sense of want is keen, his desire of relief is intense, his effort is patient, will his victory be complete. This consciousness of deficiency, this consequent yearning, this corresponding action, taken together, make up his prayer. He prays, and is answered.

And here let me throw in a few general observations respecting certain unalterable conditions attendant upon prayer.

Praying must be done *wisely*. However *earnestly* one may pray, he may fail of his end if he pray *foolishly*. A certain degree of *intelligence* must preside over success in this respect, as in all others. The appointed *way* must be followed or the goal will never be reached.

A man desires to be rich, but he must pray for it, or he will remain poor. And he must pray *wisely*, — pray within the appointed conditions. If he sit down and bury his face in his hands and deplore his poverty, and resolve to sit there in despondency and tears until he is a rich man, he will die a pauper, on the very spot of his faithful idleness. Or if he go out upon the mountain, and mark out for himself a circle upon the earth, and begin his walk therein with a heavy burden upon his back, and determine so to walk and so to bear that burden until the purse of gold is dropped upon his track, it is evident that he must perish with his desire ungratified, in the path which he has worn with so much toil and self-denial and faith. His labor was a prayer, a devoted prayer, but a prayer of folly, and it was consequently unanswered.

But suppose this aspirant after riches pray *wisely*. He begins with personal economy. He seeks out the most profitable fields for effort. He studies others' mistakes and others' successes. He treads cautiously. He wins friends. He secures allies. He is unweariedly active, cheerfully patient. He gets and keeps, and in time becomes a man of fortune. His success is the fruit of *prayer*, — a deep, earnest prayer of *faith*. In other words, of *wise effort*, based upon *conviction*.

The idea of prayer, as generally interpreted, includes a recognition of some external agent or power, to whom or which the supplication is made, and through whose instrumentality the petition is answered. It may be asked, "How is this idea tenable with the definition which I have given to prayer, — to whom, for example, does the man greedy of acquisition pray?"

If you please, I will say he prays to Mammon, — to an idol whom his own cupidity has enthroned; but really his prayers are directed to an agent whose competency to answer them he knows well, and in whose aid and fidelity, thus invoked, he has implicit faith. This agent, soulless, but undeceptive, without will, yet of unerring truth, is *the established law of things*. In point of fact, it is the course of Providence, the terrestrial ordination of God; but not so recognized by him who prays, who only views it as the order and law of nature. But to this his prayers are directed. It is a law that industry shall experience recompense, — it is a law that patience shall achieve success, — it is a law that sagacity shall

outwit ignorance, — it is a law that prudence, economy, shall multiply gains; and he who would be rich, prays to these laws, — to an abstract deity, of which these laws are attributes; and that deity answers his prayers. The god of this world has his prerogatives and his patronage, as surely as the God of heaven has his attributes, and his will and ability to bless.

Yes, the man avaricious of worldly acquisitions, planning for them, toiling for them, sick at heart for them, living, dying for them, is through his life a man of deep, devoted, successful prayer.

If, then, to him the voice of the pulpit should appeal, the word of the living God should come, and say, “Pray thou to Jehovah, have thou faith in the Eternal Spirit, and in the unseen world,” and he should answer, “I know not what you mean, — prayer, faith, is a mystery to me,” I would reply, “Have the trust in the will of Heaven that you have in the law of earth. Believe in *God* as you believe in *Mammon*. Pray toward virtue as you have prayed toward gain; love righteousness as you have loved lucre. Your whole life has been a prayer, but a prayer to the Evil One, — to the great *false* spirit, — and your prayer has been *answered*, as *all* earnest, judicious prayer shall be answered, but not to your benefit. You have now a dry, husky heart; you have a close, narrow soul; your native manliness is dwarfed; you are down below noble thoughts and noble deeds; you have swelled your purse, but shrivelled your affections. You have walked by the torch-blaze of low passion, and have



forsaken the guidance of the lights of Heaven. You preferred the mine of Pluto to the paradise of God ; but your prayers are answered, your faith is triumphant. You *do* know what *prayer* is and what *faith* is, but you do *not* know what prayer to the God of Holiness is, what faith in his kingdom of love is. To every plodding, anxious worldling the answer would be the same.

It must be obvious, then, that religious faith is as simple, as easy of comprehension, as practicable an experience as a mercenary faith, — the love of lucre stimulating one, the love of God the other ; and that religious prayer is but the yearning, the energy of the faculties toward spiritual objects, as worldly prayer is their direction toward temporal objects.

I may now ask, Is it not manifest that much that passes for prayer in the religious world has no right to be so called. What, for example, are so many of the superstitious mummeries of Christendom, not entitled even to the *name* of prayers ? Suppose prayers were *visible*, suppose their spiritual quality to be represented by their buoyancy, — that just in proportion to their possession of this quality they would rise above the ceiling of the private closet, or the arches of the vaulted cathedral, in their way to the skies, how many of these nominal globes of soul would float upward to the courts of grace ? how many would surmount the cross-current of an earthly atmosphere ? how many, indeed, would overtop the level of the petitioner's heart ? Nay, how many, how *very* many, would *fall*, like leaden

balls, upon the earth, as if they were prayers to the god *below* instead of the God above.

Why are not the prayers of Christians more successful? Why are not praying Christians better men? Why do they not *grow* better, as they pray? For this reason. They fall upon their knees, they utter words, they go through a form, but they do not *pray*; their worship is hardly upon the outer sill of true devotion. If men desiring eminence were to pray so, they would pine in obscurity. If men seeking wealth were to pray so, they would perish in an almshouse. Posture is not prayer; words are not wishes; forms are not *faith*. If the nominally *religious* world might this day pray before the God of purity and of Christian influences, as the secular world will this week to the god of gain, the result of that supplication would be almost *instantly* felt; would be almost *instantly* visible. There would be an increased illumination over the soul-world, as there is in the gas-lighted temple, when a fresh current is let in upon the dim blaze. Religious action would take on an energy that would startle *sin* in his dreams. The vigor and dignity of moral purpose would abash the wicked in their plots and pursuits of evil; and if the world (as some sad-hearted observers have supposed) were retrograding in righteousness, were rushing onward in an evil orbit, such a prayer would bring it, in all its momentum of vice, to a stop, as if Jehovah's hand had stayed it.

We have all seen cases in which young persons, who have had tasks set them, have returned to their

teachers or parents, declaring their inability to do what was required of them. They have returned, faithless as to themselves, as to the objects set before them, as to the means pointed out for the attainment of those objects. But we have heard the parent or teacher bid such children "*try*," and we have seen the children with an enkindled determination go back to their effort, and easily accomplish their task.

It is against precisely such a distrust with respect to *prayer* that I would guard you. You doubt, because you have not "*tried*." If you weigh prayer in the balance of *form*, or of habit, or of indifference, you may expect to find it wanting; but it never was found light when placed in the scales of real faith and real religious desire. Discriminate, then, between *saying*; "O God! we would be blessed," and that yearning of the *soul* that *cries* for the blessing, — that purpose of the *spirit* that *labors* to be blessed. One ejaculation of the *heart* avails more than verbal petitions, protracted through eternity. A single jet from the *spiritual depths* is worth more than an ocean of frothy sentimentalism.

My hearers, as I have shown, you know what *faith* is, what *prayer* is. Let it now be the endeavor of your lives to know the true *objects* of *faith* and of *prayer*. Some will say to you, and perhaps your secret desires will repeat the counsel, "Pray to the *world's* idols, and have faith in the world's rewards"; but I say to you, and the Gospel and your destiny repeat the counsel, Pray to *God*, and have faith in Jesus, and in righteousness, and in immortality.

## SERMON X.

### BEARING WITNESS TO THE TRUTH.

TO THIS END WAS I BORN, AND FOR THIS CAUSE CAME I INTO  
THE WORLD, THAT I SHOULD BEAR WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH.  
— John xviii. 37.

THE great force of this declaration falls upon the phrase “bear witness,” as the chief power of Christ’s mission itself lay in the “*testimony*” to the truth.

Let us sufficiently distinguish between *holding* the truth and *testifying* to the truth.

A man may, for example, *know* the facts in a case which is tried before a jury, but, for reasons, he may maintain silence concerning those facts. He may not disclose to any one that he possesses a knowledge of them; consequently, he is not summoned as a witness. The trial proceeds. Suppose a verdict to be rendered in conformity with the facts of which he is cognizant, the issue is right; but his knowledge had nothing to do with that issue. The result may, indeed, have been founded upon incorrect premises, so that it is in reality false as connected with those premises, though true when viewed in relation to the real facts of the case. Here, then, the man who alone knew of those exact facts permitted the tri-

umph of a lie in relation to the premises (the *assumed* facts in the case), which were all that the jurors or the community could observe.

But suppose the verdict had been inconsistent with the facts, as known by the individual of whom we speak, how palpable now is the distinction between his knowledge of the truth, and this verdict contrary to the truth! And this is but saying, how signal is the distinction between a *possession* of the truth and a *testimony* to it; for testimony in this case would have averted that false verdict, — false, because such testimony was not rendered. The withholding of testimony here negatively originated the falsehood; nay, perhaps *positively* established it, — for one who, by deliberate self-withdrawal, gives a foreseen scope to a lie, is, in so far as that act is concerned, hardly less criminal than if, by false testimony, he had established the lie.

To make the application more general, Does the mere possession of any *fact*, or any *truth*, whether of science, or of circumstances, or of theology, constitute the possessor a truthful man? In no respect. Two persons may be placed in contact with what *we* see to be error; one may receive it, the other may reject it. Is he who receives it the less veracious of the two? No! his very veracity, his sincerity, his integrity, may have caused him to embrace the error, while the disingenuousness of the other may have inclined him to reject it. For the former seizes the *error* honestly *as* the truth, and is the *truth-lover*; while the latter, perversely influenced, declines the error, *not knowing that it is error*, and is the *truth-hater*.

It is not, therefore, the mere possession of truth that entitles a person to the name of a defender, or a friend of the truth. He may be its foe. We often obtain truth through accident, through constitutional aptitude, through natural sagacity. It sinks into our conviction without effort, and without merit of our own. We cannot help entertaining it.

Now, in what consists any dignity, or any worth of one's mind or heart, in its connection with truth? It consists in this. In the *RELATION* which such mind or heart maintains toward the truth, and so far as the moral life, the spiritual energy of society, is concerned, it is this *relation* rather than the truth itself that is the vitalizing power of that society.

Cast into the mass of human knowledge the *whole truth* concerning the stellar universe. Here is one of the sublimest communications that the mind can embrace. But of what service is this bequest to the world, unless minds quake beneath the awful burden, or hearts are awed and silenced by its vastness? Would it not be better that the great body of the truth should have been withheld, provided that the world had been enabled the more effectually to seize and feel the residue of the truth?

What is Christianity in the world independently of hearts, consciences, and wills? It is, as it were, *nothing*, — no more than light is without eyes. Salvation is not Christian truth, but it is the relation of the individual soul to that truth; and if you would seek the source of life to a church, you must look for some exalted *relation* maintained by individuals of that church to its life-giving doctrine. Doctrines

might be proclaimed for a century, and they might embosom truths which should be scattered in a million minds and hearts, yet those truths might be as unprolific as the seeds which for thousands of years have lain in the dust of an Egyptian catacomb. But let the *relation* which one soul may sustain toward those doctrines declare and illustrate them,—it is like uncovering the seeds at the mummy's feet to the air, and the light, and the dews. Or such relation is like the spark which touches fireworks that were hidden in the darkness, and which lights up their dull outline into beauty. Such an example has been sometimes found in the martyr who perishes for faith. The martyrdom shows not the truth, the absolute truth, but it shows the *relation* of a soul to what it believes the truth. It shows human truth, truth of character, truth of life, truth of being.

It is easy to see why it is, that what an after age may deem error for so many generations has held almost absolute sway over nations. We discover this reason in the sublime exhibitions which were made of personal *relations* to supposed truth,—*relations* stronger than those to property, country, or life. How is the religious history of Scotland, for example, illustrated by facts of this character; and what a faith they must enkindle in the popular heart. One hundred and fifty years ago, (in the language of Macaulay), Margaret Maclachlan and Margaret Wilson, the former an aged widow, the latter a maiden of eighteen, suffered death for their religion. They were offered their lives if they would consent to abjure the cause of the insurgent Covenanters, and to

attend the Episcopal worship. They refused, and they were sentenced to be drowned. They were carried to a spot which the Solway overflows twice a day, and fastened to stakes fixed in the sand, between high and low water mark. The elder sufferer was placed near to the advancing flood, in the hope that her last agonies might terrify the younger into submission. The sight was dreadful; but the courage of the survivor was sustained; she saw the sea draw nearer and nearer, but gave no sign of alarm. She prayed and sang psalms till the waves choked her voice. When she had tasted the bitterness of death, she was, by a cruel mercy, unbound and restored to life. When she came to herself, pitying friends and neighbors implored her to yield. "Dear Margaret, only say, 'God save the king.'" The poor girl, true to her stern theology, gasped out, "*May God save him, if it be God's will.*" Her friends crowded round the presiding officer: "She has said it; indeed, Sir, she has said it!" "Will she take the abjuration?" he demanded. "*Never!*" she exclaimed; "*I am Christ's; let me go.*" And the waters closed over her for the last time. In like manner was the truth, as it is in Jesus, sustained through the early centuries of Christianity. Believers sealed it as a reality by their unconquerable faith,—by their unshunned deaths. The inference was, such a *relation* to known falsehood no soul can sustain; under hypocrisy, no such *expression* is possible.

When old Polycarp (a pupil of the Apostle John) was apprehended, and was conducted into the



crowded stadium, the Proconsul in compassion entreated him to conceal his name, on account of the vindictive feeling of the heathen mob toward him. But such silence would not have expressed the saint's *relation* to the truth. He then proclaimed aloud that he was Polycarp. The trial proceeded. "Swear," shouted the multitude, "by the Genius of *Cæsar*; retract and say, Away with the godless!" The old man gazed in sorrow at the benches of frantic and raging spectators, rising above each other, and, with his eyes uplifted to heaven, said, "Away with the godless!" The Proconsul urged him further. "Swear, and I release thee; blaspheme Christ." "Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and he has never done me an injury; now can I blaspheme my king and my Saviour?" And when bound to the stake, he prayed, "O Lord God Almighty! I thank thee that thou hast graciously thought me worthy of this day and this hour, that I may receive a portion in the number of thy martyrs, and drink of Christ's cup, for the resurrection to eternal life!"

But pass back to the martyrdom of the Saviour himself. It is his relation to his own truths, which more, even than those truths themselves, are transforming the world; because that *relation* was the greatest, the most appreciable and the most touching of all the truths. Hence, the world agrees that Christ's life (involving of course his death) is more vital than his *doctrines*, — that more of transforming truth flashes from his *truth of soul*, than from the abstract revelations that fell from his lips.

And here let me say what I have before alluded

to; that it is not necessary that what is held for truth should be the absolute truth. In Christ it *was* the transcript of eternal and perfect verity; but in mortals, the only perfect truth lies in the *conviction* of the possessor that what he holds *is* truth. In this direction lies what, in humanity, may be said to border on the divine, — what illustrates the spiritual, — what prophesies of immortality. For, search where and as you will, fealty of the conscience, consecration of the being to conviction, the soul's homage to its perception of the truth, is the sublimest moral spectacle in the world. It makes all other shows seem trivial, and it makes all other substantialities seem mutable and fleeting.

You err, if you think that I have been declaiming upon abstractions, — that, in general, all is as I have said, but that it cannot converge into a practical application to yourselves. It can, and in various ways. But I shall allude to one or two points only. Most or all of you believe, that you hold Christian doctrines under forms nearest to the truth; or, to speak more definitely, that you hold the truths of Christian doctrine.

Well, this is your possession. What is it worth to you? what is it worth to the world? The answer is found here. That worth lies in the *relation* which you maintain toward those truths, — in your *expression* and witness of those truths. Do not shut out from your conviction this fact, that a *true relation* of the soul to *error* will work a nobler purification for the world, and for the individual heart, than a *false relation* of the soul to *truth*. For in the

*relation* lies the chief *vitality*. Give a denomination the whole circle of the truths; yet let it be supine or unfaithful, and its falsity of relation will kill it, and perhaps its doctrines; while a denomination, mingling with its creeds many errors, yet in its relation to those errors showing devotedness, self-sacrifice, faith will spread and establish itself. From the heathen world, God will take for his saints such as maintain a *true relation* to convictions dark with error; while, out of the Christian world, he will *not* take for a saint one who maintains false relations to knowledge illuminated from on high.

You may now determine what your doctrinal truth is worth to you or to the world. Does your relation to it, does your expression of it, sanctify it, or give it life, — enlist for it reverence, clothe it in power, or help its weary and obstructed footsteps? If any bring you to the rack of severe questioning, or of urgent entreaty, or of compassionate warning, do you shrink and compromise, — do you disclaim and profess ignorance, — do you avow uncertainty, — lay all forms of doctrine on the same precarious platform, — profess unbounded toleration, and hesitatingly ask the liberty you grant? If you do, what an infinite distance there is between God's majestic truth which he has lodged in your bosoms and your relation to that truth! And in the breast of another, how quickly would that truth fade away before the timid and deprecatory expression of it from your lips and from your position. You absolutely throw over it the drapery of falsehood and worthlessness, and challenge a sneer, or rivet incredulity.

Or, are you indifferent? Then you hold truth as the stomach would hold a diamond. It merely comes into contact with your inward nature; but it is in nowise assimilated. It rather oppresses than vitalizes. Who will honor, or who will accept from you, or through you, as a truth that should be as a force to upheave the will, or as the very principle of soul-life, what does not even ruffle the surface of your being, what is *practically*, to you, a delusion or a lie?

Do not mistake the nature of this genuine, vital relation, nor the fitting expressions of it. Individual or joint action on your parts, for the spread of the doctrines you hold, *may* reveal such genuine relation. Money expended, sacrifices borne for the same end, may reveal it; but its true disclosure waits upon conviction, upon character, *upon the quality of your daily life*, to which men may point and say, "It is beautiful, — *there* is the testimony to a faith that has been with Jesus!"

Will there not be some of you who will have to render an account for your lukewarmness toward what you acknowledge to be the truths of the Gospel, — for your faithlessness in that stewardship of doctrine, which God has committed to your charge? You seem to think that the foundations of truth, as it is to be built up in this world, do not rest upon layers of human faith and endeavor; that the Almighty can establish his verities without your agency, perhaps without your cognizance. As well might you hope to kindle a fire on the naked granite, with air for fuel. If God drops upon earth the living coal

of his truth, it is for men to heap the combustibles around it; and if the coal die out, it is *man's* guilt, not *God's* neglect. You are responsible for the darkness and the chill which follow the extinction of the spark.

In what I have said, it is true my thought has leaned primarily toward your vindication of the Gospel, in the peculiar form in which you hold it. Yet do not understand me as urging to this end for no other result than the spread of a mere doctrine and the enlargement of a mere sect. I value the form of the Gospel which we in common accept, not as a denominational symbol, but as a heavenly power in the life. True, your Christianity must rest upon doctrinal beliefs; but its living relation is to your moral and spiritual condition, generally to your inward purity, your social probity, your truth of speech, your peace-making desires, your unselfish and unworldly aims. In these directions, every earthly interest, and every heavenly hope, — the claims of men, and the law of God, urge you to *bear witness to the truth*.

Would that you might feel that there is committed to you no stewardship so solemn, and none so glorious, as the stewardship of the *faith which is by Jesus Christ*.

## SERMON XI.

### STEPHEN.

AND THEY CHOSE STEPHEN, A MAN FULL OF FAITH AND OF THE HOLY GHOST. — Acts vi. 5.

THE central point of this discourse will be the history of Stephen, as it can be gathered from the scanty suggestions of Scripture, carried out by probable conjecture. Around this centre, facts and circumstances illustrating the position and growth of Christianity will be naturally grouped.

Immediately succeeding the ascension of Jesus there was, without doubt, a feeling of loneliness in the hearts of the disciples. It was natural that it should be so. That form, which by its presence had imparted trust and power, was removed from sight and from appeal. Those lips could no longer counsel, — those eyes could no longer rebuke or reprove. That attraction that made companionship and service so sweet a joy was dissolved, and the invisible bond of memory was to take the place of the strong tie of the senses.

Yet the disciples lived in trust of even a personal terrestrial reunion at some future time. The words of the angels, as their Lord faded into the heavens, supplied them with constant food for expectation.

The declarations also of Jesus himself sustained an undying interest in that anticipated event.

Naturally their relation to Jesus began to change. What before was a species of earthly intercourse gradually took the form of spiritual communion. Unselfish aspirations by degrees displaced their temporal covetings. Their eyes and their hearts looked toward those heavens into which the divine form of their Lord had passed, and through channels other than human and ordinary they anticipated the fulfilment of the promises, in blessings less tangible and gross than had once filled their conceptions.

Thus impressed, the circle of Apostles retained its outward integrity of relation to Jesus. The place made vacant by the death of Judas they filled by lot, so that twelve eye-witnesses and personal attendants of the Lord, were still set apart, as during his life, to testify to his deeds and his resurrection.

A new consecration fell upon the disciples; a clearer illumination of the truth, — a profounder comprehension of their tie to Christ, on the day of Pentecost. From that hour, they felt that the promise *was fulfilled*; and before their eyes spread, unclouded by doubts, the field of their duties. "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost parts of the earth," were to hear the word of God.

For a while, the residence of the Apostles and the disciples was Jerusalem. They met continually, in private houses, in synagogues, and in the temple. They encouraged each other in the faith, — they taught it publicly, and God confirmed their teachings with "signs following." The more prominent

and active of them were seized, and catechized and threatened and imprisoned by the Jewish rulers, — but to no effect. No sooner were they released, than they repaired to their own little brotherhood; and there they recounted the scenes they had gone through, and each recruited the other's faith, and they prayed and sang together, and pledged themselves anew to the persecuted cause.

One feature in this early community deserves especial mention. I refer to the close bond of union and fellowship that existed among the primitive Christians. They in fact constituted one household in their affection and reciprocation of services and distribution of goods. Not that they threw their property into one common stock, maintaining the equal right of each in the whole, according to the modern theory of communism, but they held their means in constant readiness to relieve wherever necessity existed. They, without doubt, constituted a more intimate and sympathetic and unselfish brotherhood than the most Christianized communities of the present day. In view of the blessing of the Gospel, all other possessions were insignificant. To the transcendent worth of that these were joyfully and eagerly sacrificed. The living Christ was among them, as, to our reproach, he is not with us.

As the number of disciples multiplied, the difficulty of a satisfactory distribution of alms increased. The recipients of this bounty were scattered far beyond the limits of Jerusalem. They were composed of two classes, those of Hebrew extraction, who resided in Palestine, and spoke the native dialect of Pales-



tine, and those of Jewish descent, who had dwelt beyond the confines of Palestine, and to whom the Greek language was vernacular. For some reason, the Grecian disciples conceived that partiality was manifested in the bestowment of the common charities, and that the Hebrew widows received more than their share. The Apostles were perplexed. These complaints probably became numerous, and required time and attention to sift and set right what was wrong. To do this faithfully, diverted the energies of the Apostles from their great work of teaching the Gospel. It became therefore necessary to appoint certain individuals whose duty it should be to superintend this distribution of alms. Seven men were accordingly appointed to this charge, — men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom and among these, and first chosen, *was Stephen*.

From the *names* of the seven, it has been inferred, that they were Grecian Jews. They, probably, would know better than others the wants of the complaining portion of the disciples; they were more conversant with their language, and would command a greater degree of confidence than if they had been Hebrews in the full sense of the term. What wisdom and tact did it evince in that body, thus to select their almoners.

After this arrangement, the cause of the Gospel acquired new strength; the number of disciples largely increased in Jerusalem, and, what is a fact of special significance, “a great company of the priests were obedient unto the faith.”

The new position of Stephen not only connected

him with the dispensing of the charities of the community, but also with preaching, exhortation, and argument in presence of the gainsayers of the Gospel.

*Where* Stephen was converted to Christianity, or by whom, we know not. Yet we call to mind the fact, that during Jesus's life, while he was at the feast of the Passover, at Jerusalem, there were certain Grecian Jews present, who desired to see Jesus. It is not unlikely that Stephen was of this number. From what we gather of him, he was of such a character as would have been deeply impressed by what he might hear and see of Jesus. Educated away from the centre of Jewish influences, lightly bound by the traditions that trammelled others of Israelitish descent, and standing less in awe of the priests than if he had been nurtured beneath the shadow of their pride, he would not hesitate to accept as truth what, from its repugnancy to Rabbinical interpretation, would have been rejected by the majority of Hebrew listeners. But whether or not he *did* receive his impressions of the Gospel from Jesus himself, *this* is certain, that Gospel, in the fulness of its spirit, dwelt in his heart.

Stephen was probably about St. Paul's age ; and, in some respects, he reminds us of the great Apostle. He had a quick insight into the truth, he was thoroughly versed in the ancient Hebrew history, and, like Paul, gave strength to his argument and seriousness to his discourse by ample quotations from the Prophets. *Morally*, he was like Paul, — bold, earnest, and direct ; he feared not the face of man. In

his intrepid defence of the truth, he seems to have caught a higher spirit, if possible, than Paul's, in which the sublimity that marked Christ's demeanor before human tribunals in no slight degree appears. In the power of his religious imagination, and in the vehemence of his feeling, he greatly resembles the Apostle to the Gentiles. But with all his unflinching adherence to purpose, his clear perception of the dissimulation and perverseness of the Jewish rulers, his open hostility to their views, he carried with him a serenity that was truly admirable, and a tenderness that could have been borrowed only from the cross. In *this* beauty of the Christian character, Paul and Stephen were brother disciples.

The foreign Jews who occasionally assembled at Jerusalem met together for instruction in their own exclusive synagogues. These assemblages, consisting of Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and Cilicians, and Asians; Stephen especially addressed upon the great subject of the messiahship of Christ. Evidently he was the fittest person to stand in this position. The culture of his auditors was not unlike his; he would best understand their needs, could best comprehend their difficulties, and with more certainty could meet their arguments and dispel their doubts, than could any other disciple who had been trained in Jerusalem or its neighborhood.

From this class of Jews Stephen made many converts. The sphere which was thus open to him was different from that which invited the labors of Paul. The latter, by descent, by natural affinities, by culture, had been intensely Jewish; when, therefore,

he broke away from these early and tenacious bonds, resigned everything that he had once held so sacred, and threw his whole energies and soul into a work so diverse as that of laying Judaism at the feet of Christ, the effect upon those who had been similarly trained must have been prodigious. Hebrews would less reluctantly follow where "a Hebrew of the Hebrews" led. And although Paul was *specialy* Apostle to the Gentiles, yet throughout his letters we see with what power he brought all the peculiarities of his origin and associations to bear upon the uncompromising Jews with whom he was called to deal. A similar power, probably, Stephen exerted over the Hellenistic Jews.

The success that followed the labors of Stephen aroused against him a formidable opposition. The unconvinced of the temporary sojourners at Jerusalem made their way to the Chief Priests and Scribes, and incited them to demonstrations of hostility against Stephen. They carried with them suborned witnesses, who testified that Stephen had blasphemed against Moses and against God. There was without doubt a *foundation* on which this charge was made to rest. With his superior freedom of interpretation of the Jewish law and the Prophets, Stephen spoke less reservedly than some would have done of the Mosaic institutions. Believing that they were to be merged in Christianity, that all the prophecies could be fulfilled only in the Gospel, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Jewish Messiah, that is to say, their anointed, spiritual deliverer, he would not scruple to affirm that cleanli-

ness of the *soul* must displace circumcision of the body; that the offerings of a contrite heart must succeed the oblations of bulls and goats; and that a universal and spiritual worship must take the place of the national services in the Temple. This declaration to bigoted Jews would be tantamount to blasphemy, and upon this charge Stephen was brought before the Sanhedrim for trial. Here also witnesses falsely testified to some *form of words* that should make out a case of blasphemy against him. As this perjured evidence brought him into deeper and deeper peril, and whetted against him the vindictive purposes of his judges, all eyes were fastened upon him. And as he stood there, the light of his faith, the purity of his purpose, and that serenity that bespeaks a pure conscience and a divine trust, shone from his countenance, as from the face of an angel. The High-Priest then calls upon him for his defence. He enters upon it with a boldness having no look of audacity, and a manliness unalloyed by conceit. He begins, as it were, apologetically. His purpose was to show that all that he had really said was consistent with the general tenor of Hebrew Scripture,—that he had affirmed no other blasphemy than the prophets had predicted. He *exalts* the standing and commission of Moses,—then quotes him as testifying to the prophet that should come after him. As he touches upon the elder prophets and their times, the thought forces itself into his mind that the same perverse and vindictive feelings which the ancestors of his accusers had displayed toward those sacred teachers of God were exhibited in more malignant

forms by these living persecutors towards the Saviour of the world. These had filled up the measure of their fathers; and as this thought swelled in his mind, his whole moral nature afire with indignation, he burst forth into that terrible rebuke, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in *heart* and *ears*, ye do *always* resist the Holy Ghost! As your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have *not* your fathers persecuted? and they have *slain* them which showed before the coming of the Just One, of whom *ye* have been now the betrayers and murderers, — who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."

A German critic has said that the *conscience* of the Jews was particularly sensitive. Their long training under their peculiar dispensation would induce us to believe that this might be. Unfortunately, that sensitiveness of conscience worked out results of passion and wicked energy rather than meekness and penitence. Stephen had probed the depths of this *active* faculty, and as he reached that part of his discourse which I have just repeated, there was a fearful stir in the council. As if despairing of permission to prosecute his defence farther, he allowed his prophetic zeal to carry him whither it would. It snatched his mind from the train of earthly events which he had been following, and bore it suddenly upwards, in divine contemplation. His eye was fixed upon the heavens, — the vision of glory burst upon his sight, — the "*Just One*" whom they had murdered seemed standing there, exalted by Jehovah above all creatures, and ruling the seen

and the unseen world, — and Stephen cried, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing upon the right hand of God.” Upon this the assembly burst into tumult, and thrusting their fingers into their ears, rushed, with outcries of rage, upon the poor lone disciple, and dragged him out of the chamber, and beyond the city walls. They waited for no trial, — they sought no judicial verdict, — but, taking the law into their own hands, they executed it upon the uncondemned Stephen. The heavy stones fell thick and fast upon him. As he staggered beneath the terrible shower, he called out, in the steadfastness of a faith that could not perish, and in the joy of a speedy deliverance, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” Then, for a moment holding himself reverently upon his knees, with a life fast sinking beneath the missiles of his persecutors, — with their shouts of execration in his ears, he called out in a voice that absorbed every expiring energy, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,” “and when he had said this, he fell asleep.” How descriptive of his peace of soul, and of the narrator’s faith in an awakening, that phrase, “fell asleep”!

Agreeably to the Jewish law, those whose testimony convicted a prisoner, and brought him to death, must cast the first stones at him, so that if their testimony should afterward be proved false, they might be held to the responsibility of murder. The law was a security against perjury.

In the crowd that surrounded Stephen was a young man, whose hostility toward the Christians had been particularly bitter, and whose persecutions

of them had already rendered him noted. Before the witnesses could begin their bloody work, they were obliged to fling off their encumbering mantles, and these they placed in charge of that young by-stander. This fact shows, plainly enough, their sense of his sympathy and approbation of their act. He was known as *Saul of Tarsus*.

This martyrdom, the triumph of the mob-spirit, was the signal of a terrible persecution of the disciples, in and about Jerusalem. They were scattered to distant parts of Palestine,—none remained behind but the Apostles. Saul of Tarsus was the chief agent of this persecution; and such was the ferocity with which he engaged in this inhuman work, that it seems not out of place to suppose that the impression which he received from the death of Stephen, goaded him onward, as by the rule of contraries.

It is not impossible that some misgivings may, for the instant, have visited him as he witnessed Stephen's touching and sublime death. To crowd away these misgivings,—to shut his heart resolutely against what might have seemed to him a forsaking of the Jehovah of Israel,—to smother what he might deem the preposterous questionings of a conscience, on which glimmerings of the truth might be falling, unconsciously to himself; he may have rushed to the work of persecution with a morbid zeal, piling purpose upon purpose, act upon act. One thing is certain, that his participation in the death of Stephen dwelt upon his memory; for afterwards, in recounting the facts of his previous history, as offering cause



why he should not be trusted in his new mission of love, he particularly designates as the crowning act of his hostility to the followers of Christ, that he stood by when Stephen's blood was shed, and consented unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. I have little doubt that that death of Stephen operated in preparing the moral nature of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, for that supernatural visitation which fitted him to bring heathen nations to the feet of Christ. We know that this tragic event, like a moral whirlwind, scattered through distant regions the living fire of the truth. It sent forth the preachers fresh from this experience of sorrow, — fresh from this example of faith, to encounter in the holy cause a similar peril, if need be, to die a similar death.

In tracing the consequences of this first martyrdom, we are deeply impressed with the truth which age repeats to age, and generation to generation, that no man can live a life of righteousness and fidelity in vain, — that though, when sown in the world it may be overlaid by adverse circumstances, as falling leaves may cover the seed, it will spring up at some future day, in power and blessing, when the shade that chilled it shall have been removed, or when other circumstances shall have *uncovered* it to the ripening influence of God's providence.

## SERMON XII.

“NO MATTER WHAT ONE BELIEVES.”

THE TIME COMETH, THAT WHOSOEVER KILLETH YOU WILL THINK  
THAT HE DOETH GOD SERVICE.—John xvi. 2.

I WISH in this discourse to examine a proposition somewhat popular, and to expose the fallacies which it contains. The proposition takes this form: “It is no matter what one believes, look to his practice; no matter what one believes, only let him be sincere.”

It makes a good deal of difference what class of persons urge this statement, and in what spirit it is urged. From the lips of one class, it is empty of all serious meaning, yet it is pregnant with mischief. From the other class, the spirit in which it is presented robs it of a portion of its dangerousness.

Thus this saying (for it has become almost a maxim with some) is a favorite with such as are less anxious to guard purity of practice than to exempt from rigor of opinion, who disrelish serious investigations after a true Christian doctrine, and who are equally indifferent to the claims of a true religious life. Their position is negative. They

hate the wars of sects. They dislike ecclesiastical organizations. They disparage the Church, it may be; they see no necessity for holding clear and earnest opinions concerning Christ and the soul, and out of this negative position comes their protest against the importance of opinions, which protest, from a sort of verbal necessity, rises up into a correlative statement of the value of conduct; propositions which maintain a rhetorical equilibrium, rather than a balance of convictions.

The protest, then, of this class, originating in moral indifference and practical laxity, prostrates all theoretical barriers to evil, while it erects no other defences in their stead. It is simply a plea for general license.

But there is a second class, who urge the proposition which we are considering from a different spirit. They desire to further practical righteousness, — they lament the prodigious waste of power in the Church, in teaching sharp dogmas upon whose razor-edges they believe no practical issues can rest. They think, that, if the forces that have been spent in mutual antagonism among the doctrinal sections of Christendom had been allied for the overthrow of practical immorality, that there would have been an unspeakable gain to the purity and rectitude of the world. In short, their ground of protest is, not that they value opinions less, but that they prize virtue and sanctity of living more.

The mischief, then, that is likely to ensue from the protest against opinions put forth by this class results from the fact that, while they themselves do

really hold sound convictions in respect, they are *understood as setting but a slight value upon them*; and further, what they, with their serious purpose may hold without harm to themselves, others with no such purpose cannot hold without mischief.

But by whichever class the conception concerning belief is entertained, it is founded upon fallacies, and can only be built up into temptation and moral danger.

I will repeat the proposition: "No matter what one believes, look to his practice, only let him be sincere."

The first objection to this is, that it is vague and sweeping; from its very indefiniteness, it invites every species of perversion. Unless interpretation of it be dictated by the hearer's good sense; unless it find qualifications in the disinterestedness and moral purpose of him to whom it is addressed; unless, in short, wise and good men alone are called to act upon it, it is an unsafe maxim for the individual and for society, for worldly prosperity and for spiritual well-being.

Note the drift of the first clause, — "No matter what one believes." Now, with what does a man believe? With anything less than his rational faculties? with any powers inferior to those which raise him above the brute, and clothe him in immortality? No, — the formation of opinions is one of the highest processes of the inner being. It is the action of the understanding in conjunction with the action of the moral nature. It is that part of man which sweeps out from himself through the universe, and which

comes back from this wide track and turns inwards and scrutinizes self, — which weighs all the problems of life, which would even pierce the mystery of the divine providence and being.

Now, the proposition which we are considering exempts this whole, noblest province of human action from the oversight of God. In other words, it declares that the creature, responsible for the work of his hands and the path of his feet, is not responsible for the exercise of his intellect and for the course of his opinions. “No matter what a man believes”; that is the phrase, — “*No matter.*” His conscience is not concerned in this, — his judgment need not enter into it. Hap-hazard is as good as deliberation, — reckless plunges are as valuable as cautious and scrupulous gropings, — “No matter,” as pertaining to morals or as pertaining to consequences, whether his opinions make man a clod or an angel, this life a slope that ends for ever in the dark valley or a plain from whose glorious level a soul may advance to brighter and better worlds; “no matter” whether God be an infinite impersonal force or a father bending down to his creatures in love, — it is all the same, provided conduct squares with certain rules, or, if you please, embodies a certain spirit.

This proposition substantially assumes, that opinions do not affect practice.

Now the broad history of the world teaches us that ideas, or opinions (that is, what men have believed), have been the seeds of the world’s practice. They have preceded all progress. Nay, opinions are the true spiritual substance, of which after-realizations are the projected earthly shadows.

So individual conduct is the embodiment of some sort of opinions. These cannot exist in the mind without products in the life; nor can the life take on a single deliberate phase which is not the result of opinion.

The *sheerest fallacy* runs through the idea that "it is no matter what a man believes." The only form which the proposition can assume to save it from being an absurdity, is to suppose it to assert that it is no matter what opinions of a *certain kind* one possesses, provided they are conjoined with those of another kind which entirely overrule them. For example, one might say, "No matter what you believe concerning the *essence* of Jesus's *psychological* constitution, provided you admit his divine authority and the obligation to seek the inspiration of his spirit." But here there is a denial of the proposition that it is no matter what opinions one holds. It is made to appear a matter of moment that certain opinions should be entertained. The pivot *now* on which the proposition turns is *a choice of opinions*.

But even on those very points, excepted from the dominion of exact opinion, I am not ready to admit that it can be *no matter*, absolutely *no matter*, *what is believed*. The history of sects shows that it *is* matter. While differing portions of the Christian Church may be moral and pious,—the result of the broad precepts and holy example of Jesus,—a common ground of faith, it is not to be denied that their *styles* of morals and religion vary,—which is the result of different opinions concerning points which some would set outside of the circle of thought

and which others would regard as entirely unimportant. It is these very opinions that give to Calvinism its hue, to Wesleyan Methodism its peculiarities, to Unitarianism its distinctive aspects, and to No-religion-ism its characteristics.

This disparagement of opinions is what chiefly gives such imbecility to many lives,—disjoins the skeleton of belief, and leaves conduct and the whole mental structure deformed or changeful in its aspects and uncertain in its gait. Seek out any life that is especially consistent and persevering, worthy of honor and confidence, and you will find it upheld by a framework of definite and decided opinions, and definite and decided, probably, with respect to some of those very points by you so lightly prized. In short, taking the proposition, “It is no matter what one believes,” generally, it is as false as history and experience can make it. There is nothing *of* a man except his opinions. Take *away* from him what he believes, and he has *no* practice. Confuse what he believes, and his practice is inconsistent and capricious. Deteriorate the quality of his opinions, and you degrade his life. Improve that quality, and you elevate his outward living. It would even be a wiser and truer proposition to reverse the maxim, and say, “No matter what one *practises*, look to his *belief*.”

There is another point to be considered. The world is full of *truths*,—God’s gifts and ordinations. One’s beliefs are the approximations of his mind toward those divine facts or relations. Every *correct* opinion is a correspondence of the human with the divine thought. Every *incorrect* opinion is a departure from the exactitude of the Creator’s facts. Now

truth, in whatever form and in whatsoever measure, is a blessing to the mind. It is a touch of life to the heart. Whoever is reckless of the belief which he holds upon any subject is liable to fail of the influences which accurate conclusions dispense, and he certainly loses the whole inspiration of an honest and humble search for the truth.

Let us now bestow a few thoughts upon another clause of the proposition we are considering: "Only be sincere"; "No matter what one believes, only *be sincere*."

There is a charm in sincerity. We can easily see how it may be made to cover a multitude of sins. It is a lovely, it is a heroic quality. When one really displays his inward being in full, he seems to throw himself upon the generosity of observers. The more transparent he makes himself, out of a sort of magnanimous trust in his fellow-men, the less clearly do they see his *frailties* and *sins*. Or, perhaps, it is thought that he who confesses frankly his imperfections and taints shows in his confession that he has the purpose to remedy, if he has not already remedied, some of those imperfections, — and that he has the intent to wipe away some of those stains, if they have not already been cleansed from his heart.

Then, again, hypocrisy is so odious a vice, — is so fruitful of embarrassment, misery, loss, in social or business life, — is so prolific of meannesses in personal character, — is so indissolubly allied with presumption and censoriousness, that override the meekness and carp at the lapses of the good, and is so fatal in its poison to the healing power of the Church, that its opposite is honored with a double



reverence and loved with a double regard. So it comes to be a virtue broader than its base will allow; and is made to fill the vacancy left by mournful deficiencies of character.

But we come now to the point, whether the fact that one honestly entertains certain opinions is a justification of those opinions. If so, then whatever be the real quality or the influences of sentiment, sincerely held, he who holds them is fully exonerated from all blame for entertaining them. “No matter what he believes, if he is only sincere.” But here, no account is made of the methods and circumstances under which he brought himself to such belief. He may have travelled to these sincerely held opinions through crime. He may have resorted to processes of self-education that were every way blameworthy, and that might have been easily avoided. In short, the whole responsibility of *the formation of his opinions* is undeniably with himself, and yet this proposition takes away from him all responsibility for his conclusions after they are fairly lodged in the conviction, *provided* they are sincere. It is wicked to perversely court evil doctrines. It is harmless to hold them when habit and familiarity esteem them good, and sincerely welcome them. It is culpable to remain passively indifferent in the presence of ideas or tenets that may be of mischievous tendency, but if they have, through the crevices of your mental sloth, insinuated themselves into your very soul, controlling it in its whole action, *no matter*, provided you *sincerely believe them true*.

The mere disclosure of this absurdity of reasoning

is enough to show that we are responsible for every opinion into whose formation our own free-will or the voluntary exercise or non-exercise of our faculties entered. By the same obligations that bind us to the exact performance of duty are we bound to take all possible pains to arrive at *correct opinions*.

*Ingenuousness* in disobeying the laws of the physical world does not relieve the offender from penalties, and why should such offence against *moral* laws, equally inexorable in their sovereignty, nobler in their guardianship, be pardoned? Here is one in the prime of life in the habit of drinking three or four glasses of intoxicating liquor a day. You reason with him and point out the danger of his course. He replies, that he is convinced that moderate drinking does nobody any harm; that it is, on the contrary, a benefit to many; that he is satisfied that the effect has been good upon himself. He does not dissemble; he believes what he says, — he is *sincere*.

But you tell him that his habit *has* injured him; that his face has begun to show his excess; that his family and his friends are anxiously commenting upon the gradual change that is taking place in his appearance and manners; that his business habits are beginning to suffer; that his temper is becoming affected, and so on.

But he replies that you are wholly mistaken. His opinion (he affirms) is very decided, that all this temperance agitation is full of harm, and all this interference with men's personal habits is full of impertinence. He is very *sincere* in his convictions. He has been brought up to believe as he talks. All his

apparent interests have counselled on the same side. Well, then, let him alone, his sincerity shields him.

Who is that, yonder, reeling into that wretched hovel? Who are those tattered and emaciated children, that flee from the poor wretch as he enters the door? Who is that broken-hearted woman, pale, tearful, trembling, who, at the bidding of his curses, stirs the embers into a faint life to prepare his food? O, *he* is that unhappy man who *sincerely* defended the habits that have ruined him! *they* are the family of that *sincere* drunkard. And this is the way *God* says *it is matter* what a man believes, — *what sincere* opinions even he holds.

Or take another case, in which the opinions held shall be of a different character. They are opinions about the Bible; about Christ; about destiny; about God. They are infidel opinions. They pronounce the Scriptures inventions, — Christ a man glorified by fable, — imperfect as other men, and having no authority beyond human. They doubt of the soul's immortality, — or if it be immortal, they say its after life will be a deliverance from present misery, and so they care not whether it be immortal or not. With respect to God, they have no *faith* in any such being. There may be one, — but he will be known only in the operation of laws, — so it is no matter whether there be one or not.

Now, I ask whether these opinions *may not be sincerely* held? There is no inherent impossibility in this. The next question is, Can they be held without coloring life, and the aims and motives of living? You will answer, No. Is it then *no matter* what the

nature of religious opinions is, provided they are sincere ?

Yes, it *is matter*, even though such sincerity were displayed from the very earliest moment of the power of thinking, — even though it accompanied every stage of after thought, — even though it sought all aids from the counsels of the living and from the pages of the dead, — though it directed *all* faculties and all opportunities in the path of investigation, — even though it sought with religious simplicity and with prayer to disembarass the heart of all prejudices and all proclivities, that the work might be well done and the issues might be correct. It *is matter* whether man, after all his severest trying, finally reaches truth or error. And if opinions, formed after pure and genuine endeavors like these, are of high importance, as to their possibilities of *evil* as well as good, what shall we say of those that result from prejudice, or conceit, or bias of evil inclination, or indifference, or sophistry ?

One may have Christian piety for, but he can hardly withhold intellectual contempt from, some who talk of their *sincerity* in the forming and holding of their opinions in religious matters, — who have never *studied* nor seriously looked at the opposing propositions, — but by some shallow impulse are moved to leap at once into a whole circle of strange tenets, or to shake from their minds all definite beliefs, and sink into scepticism and indifference. Surely, if this haste and folly be sincerity, its recommendation of an opinion is somewhat questionable.

I will close by applying the popular proposition

which we have been pondering to Paul's case, and noticing the result.

Paul was one of those of whom Christ prophetically spoke, when he said to his disciples that the time would come when “ *whosoever should kill them would think he was doing God service.*” I will then substitute the name *Paul* for the word *one*, in the proposition, and it will read, “ No matter what Paul believed, look to his practice.” *What was his practice?* It was inhuman and murderous. He inflicted dreadful sufferings, not on the guilty, but on the innocent and the meek. Then he, being judged by his visible conduct, was a blood-guilty monster. But not so. His practice falsely interprets him, unless you make it a *great deal of matter* what he believed. Ascertaining this, a new complexion passes over his deeds. They are none the less mournful and mischievous, but they cease to be criminal; because Paul supposed them to be the only just expression of the faith which he had imbibed at Gamaliel's feet, — the only true service to God.

Our proposition, then, is, so far, barren of *all fruit*, except a painful absurdity.

But again, “ No matter what Paul believed, he was *sincere.*”

But the fruits of these *sincere opinions* were cruelty and torture toward others for conscience' sake. Their very sincerity gave them a bloody edge. When those opinions gave way before the supernatural call of Christ, they were attended by no profounder sincerity, yet, contrasted with those they displaced, they were as angels flying down into the vacated nest of

demons. They bore love and peace, sanctity and joy, upon their wings. *They* blessed, *the others* cursed, the world.

Therefore it *was* matter what St. Paul believed, even though he were sincere.

Our proposition drops another absurdity from its poisoned branch. Let us away with it. It is not fit to live among the honest maxims of life. Let us look (as it counsels) to our practice. Let us give heed (as it admonishes) that we are *sincere*. But let us, also, as it does *not* advise, be careful how and what we believe, as before God and the Judgment.

## SERMON XIII.

### THE BLESSING OR THE CURSE OF THE KINGDOM.

AND INTO WHATSOEVER CITY YE ENTER, AND THEY RECEIVE YOU, SAY UNTO THEM, "THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS COME NIGH UNTO YOU." BUT INTO WHATSOEVER CITY YE ENTER, AND THEY RECEIVE YOU NOT, SAY, NOTWITHSTANDING, "BE YE SURE OF THIS, THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS COME NIGH UNTO YOU."—Luke x. 8-11.

THE kingdom of God, a blessing or a curse, according to the spirit in which it is received, is the great idea of the text.

For illustration of this idea, let us glance at some of nature's forces; that of gravity, for example. This agent holds the rolling spheres to a common centre, and keeps in its place every particle of dust and every drop of water. It concerns itself also with all earthly mechanism, with all terrestrial structures, and with the motions and positions of the human body. Its laws are read by the instincts of the tottling child. Adult prudence and skill make these laws the basis of products of beauty, of comfort, of grandeur and stability. The principle of gravity, then, appealing to intelligence and fidelity, is one of God's best blessings.

Yet, observe what disasters gravity carries to the careless or the ignorant, — the fall, that dislocates the

limbs or fractures the skull, — the toppling of walls, that crush out the lives of scores of workmen, — all varieties of accidents from loss of equilibrium, or failure of support. Terrible, yet benignant inflexibility of law!

Again, the sun is the source of countless blessings. So fruitful of favors is it, that many nations have worshipped it as the benevolent Deity; yet, its rays so strengthening to this well-rooted, sap-abounding plant, are scorching that one into crisp. Here it comforts and gladdens the prudent pilgrim, there it beats upon the unwise traveller, until he leaps in madness or sinks in exhaustion. Judiciously used, it fills the eye with pleasant hues and images; abused, it turns its own splendors into darkness, and sends the abuser groping through the world. Most hospitable and gracious is the sun, when man would deserve its favors; most terrible, when man would resist its power.

There is no blessing which does not involve the possibility of a curse; not through itself as a *cause*, but through resisting circumstances as *occasions*. The mightiest benefaction, moreover, contains the possibility of the mightiest calamity. The propelling force that makes the benefit so signal must render the mischief proportionally disastrous.

Let these illustrations take their intended direction, and throw light upon the twofold working of the *kingdom of God*.

By this kingdom, then, I understand the whole moral Providence of the Deity, — everything, whether law or grace, whether natural administration or



revelation, that is attributable to the Divine purpose. And of this kingdom I affirm *that* to be true which we have seen to be true of gravity and of the sun.

This kingdom, whose life is the benignity of God, is to the *resisting* creature whom it was intended to bless, the most terrible of scourges. (See 2 Peter ii.21.) "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."

We might spare circumlocution, and say, "God obeyed is our Father; our Father disobeyed is God." He, the most gracious to the trusting, is inflexible to the rebellious. "God is love," says one Apostle; "our God is a consuming fire," affirms another. Both are true. The fire of the Divine Presence is love, in its guidance and its genial heat, to those who, bewildered, seek the beacon, or to those who shivering, seek the warmth. So the love of the Deity is *fire*, in its deterring aspects and its retributions, to those who are turning toward sin, or who are already in the paths of wickedness.

There are theologians who divide the future world into regions, of which one is the abode of the blessed, the other the realm of the cursed. But where is the necessity of such a literal partition of hell from heaven, when by the very laws of the Eternal, sin finds its own hell, shut in from all blessed alleviations, by walls invisible, but tougher than brass, and higher than the cope of the firmament, — and all this in the very heart of Paradise itself, — amid its bliss,

its harping angels, its perfect saints, its blessing Saviour, its sovereign God?

My faith is such, that I cannot shut the Deity out of hell, this realm of perdition; for first, I cannot conceive of a soul, while it is a soul, as beyond the pale of the Divine oversight, — and next, the pains of retribution (as it seems to me) must be in part, if not chiefly, the agonies which the presence of a recognized God will excite in the heart which has trifled with his grace.

What theology can demand or desire a sadder destiny than that which sees fire in a Father's *loving* eye; a storm of retribution in a shower of grace; which makes the methods and the aims and the spirit and the joys of the holy, rebukes and tantalizations and prophecies of the doom of sin!

Let us now make some specific applications of the idea upon which we have been dwelling. As one of God's most benignant ordinations, take a well-ordered family. Into this family let the infant boy be born. A father's good counsel and consistent example are before him. A mother's solicitude, — her patience, her gentleness, guard him. Sisters entwine around him their defences of love. Religion, a sweet and peaceful sense of God's presence, breathes like a spring-air through the household. The spirit of Jesus is invoked in daily prayer; and, to the extent of human imperfection, is lived out in daily practice. Under God, here is a discipline ordained to deliver the child safely into the perils and cares of manhood, — to equip him for life's conflict. If this youth surrender himself to this discipline, he will

carry into all future emergencies the double defence of a heart trained to virtue, and of memories sacred and loving; that continually refresh his spirit, like gales from some blossoming Eden. He is safe. His heart and faith are sure. He is in God's hands. Such is the precious influence of home upon the receptive heart of this youth.

But suppose a different condition of things. Let that youth rebel against the discipline of home. Let him despise its tender influences. Let him drop its dear memories, as he goes forth into life; and his career of evil (for he will hardly escape such) will be more than ordinarily dreary and hopeless. Worse is the state of one who thus turns a leaden ear to voices that early guided him, and a brazen heart to smiles that once shed light into his bosom, than of one who never heard such voices, and was never gladdened by such smiles. If that early training and those heavenly influences are ineffectual, God's treasury of entreaties and of defences may be said to be exhausted. What melodies could even the seraph's hand draw from the harp, whose form remains, but whose strings, like straight veins in marble, are parts of one solid petrification? No! I can hope for that young man of whom in the midst of his career of evil it may be said, "*he had no home;*" but if, *despite* this gracious privilege, he show a hardness in iniquity, I tremble, lest what was intended to be to him the life and sustenance of a high, true manhood, by his perverseness has increased the sterility of his spiritual nature; lest those chambers, swept and garnished by early hands of love, have become the dwelling of more wicked and more tenacious fiends.

Take, again, the Lord's day as a gift of Christianity; a day for abstraction from secular cares and worldly tumult, — a day for meditation and worship. I know of no institution ordained for man which, in its significancy and its possible influences, can take precedence of this. It is the sacred inclosure of time, in which the Church is built, and all the sanctities of the Bible, the tender, free, fresh influences of the Bible, consecrate the day. To society, it is what the green, shaded, watered park is to the hot and dusty streets and packed squares of the city. To the meditative and devout soul, it is the soliciting opportunity, — the significant leisure, — the lull of the tempest, — the parting of the clouds, — the lawn before the heavenly gates.

See next what this day is when desecrated, — the worst of all days, — the white blessing, begrimed into a curse. The jubilee of the devout become the carnival of the profligate. There is no such dissipation on common days as there is upon this holy day. Not because other days do not offer the release from labor, but because the bonds of reverence to the day being severed, other sacred ties snap with them. Dissipate the awe with which the stranger saunters among the deep shadows or enters the vestibule of the temple, and the sanctuary itself loses its hold upon his veneration.

If I desired to lure a young heart into the worst excesses of sin, I would first strive to make him violate his reverence for Sunday; and while he was in this profane mood, I would ply him with solicitations to deeper vice. Better make the Lord's day a *holiday*,

having no odor of consecration about it, and invite the world to spend and laugh and visit upon it. Better expect of it a deeper relish of merriment, and trust, through this channel, to impart more wisdom and more sobriety and more devoutness to the world, than to call the day a *religious* day, and permit the conscience to suffer extra debauch, from a prior violation of its sanctities.

A young married couple once started to join a steamboat excursion upon Sunday. They had been religiously brought up, — brought up to revere the day, — but the novelty of the entertainment to them, the fact that they were in a strange place, the luxury of the weather, — a conjunction of facilities, together with that bewildering absorption of heart, so characteristic of this period of wedded life, persuaded them to the experiment.

But an uneasy sense of wrong-doing, the instant they started, set upon their track. A slight accident occurred before they reached the boat, and this brought them face to face with the moral question, “Shall we or shall we not employ this day in this unwonted and irreligious manner?” They hesitated. Conscience responded to conscience. The spirit of reverence in the one breast fanned the kindling spirit of reverence in the other breast, and they said, “No! let the Lord’s day be hallowed!” — and they forbore, and went home penitent.

Forty years have passed with them since then; that day has ever been to them a sacred season, and they have taught their children to revere and to love it. Its religious associations, revived and intensified from

that early experience, have intertwined with and have strengthened the whole spiritual fibres of their being.

But—and here is the point—if they *had* gone, with trampled consciences, with moral hardihood, through that day, confronting the protest of the soul with the sophistry of the senses, they might, — it is no stretch of supposition, — they might easily have lost, with certain exterior defences of the heart, its interior and radical integrity. If the indulgence had *not* been forborne, and if, in consequence, the religious beacons that have so brightly burned for them upon these Lord's-day heights for so many years had failed of being kindled, what would have been their history, as they journeyed along the dark secular vales? Would that those who have broken in upon the sanctities of the Lord's day, and have reaped the consequences, might answer!

Again, that highest of all blessings, the Gospel itself, will furnish illustration of the truth we are pondering. The Gospel is a tremendous *force* in the world; its energies were meant for good; its progress *should* be an ever-widening benediction. But beneath its heavenly wheels the careless and the hostile may be crushed. Even Christianity, unintelligently, superstitiously, received, may darken rather than brighten life, — may bear before it the exasperations of war rather than the greetings of peace.

Take that class of persons, residents of a city, who have not known, or who have forsaken, the culture of the Gospel. The idle and unworthy poor, the profligate, the ignorant, dwellers in foul places, exiles

(through their own fault chiefly) from moral society. To these the Gospel, since they do not or will not receive its blessings, may be a curse. The enterprise it awakens, the civilization it spreads, the wealth it helps to accumulate, may produce all the more signal contrasts, deepening the unhappy shadows in which the class of which I speak dwell.

What land of Paganism is so utterly benighted, stands so sorely in need of the regeneration of the Gospel, as the purlieus of a crowded city, outside of, yet touching, the circle of Christian influences? The social defences that Christian civilization erects, its profounder horror of human vices, its surer punishment of human crime, its scrupulous discriminations of charity, its religious habitudes, its very contentment, seem not unfrequently to aggravate the sin, and to add to the desperation of the unprincipled. Nothing will so soon worse than heathenize a heart as an abused Gospel. Nothing is so corrupt within us as that which we would defend by the *perverted* sanctions of our own pure faith! Startling thought! — that we cannot be constrained to God's will! that, having cast at our feet the gift of his grace, he leaves us to take it up and carry it as a treasure in our bosoms, or to stumble over it in guilt, shame, and loss!

Again, consider labor as one of the Creator's vastest dispensations, — as a chief method of administration within his kingdom.

Labor, then, is to you either a curse or a blessing. If you encounter it with a stony indifference, you cause its divine purpose to perish; and its oppressiveness only remains to gall you. If you wrestle with

it in discontent, you "kick against the pricks"; you bruise and wear away your best faculties in the strife, as the body wastes in contending with disease. If you make it the mere physical instrument of gain, a sort of procurer to your sordid yearnings, it deplorably belittles and debases you. It depends upon yourself, whether your temper, or your content, or your interpretation of life, or your sentiment of brotherhood, or your estimate of the Deity shall be impaired by the labor that is your lot, or whether by it they shall be purged of frailties and brightened for eternity. The altar of the cathedral may be the very spot on which the fanatics of a reign of terror may most successfully immolate their remnant of piety; as it may be the very spot on which languid faith may most easily catch a kindling glow. So labor may be a field of trial in which man may become a muttering blasphemer, or it may be a school of culture, in which he may learn to become a humble steward of sacred opportunities.

Follow labor, then, lowly as it may be, with patience, with trust, with cheerfulness. It may be an obscure and a thorny path. But it is one of God's roads to heaven.

Think of its *meaning* rather than of *itself*. Look at its *heart*, not at its *garb*. See it in its relation to your *soul*, not alone to your *income*. Change its forms (if it be well to do so), but keep the *unchanging* content and faith and piety that transfigure any and all of its forms.

Again, disaster of every kind, disappointment, trial of the affections, bereavements, are from the kingdom



of God. *They must come nigh unto you.* But how? In blessings or in judgments? Precisely as you receive them, — with a subdued, devout temper, or with a resistive spirit. Through tribulation you *may* enter the kingdom, but through that same tribulation you *may* be seduced into deeper suffering; and what is worse, into the deepest guilt. Grievings have turned misinterpreting hearts into stone, and they have changed stony hearts to flesh. Sorrow that has looked *upward* has seen a shining way to heaven, while sorrow that has looked *downwards* has seen the dull earth strewn with curses. There is a patience that can soothe the vexed spirit, and touch the most desolate lips into prayer. The sheet of blackest water, *if tranquil*, will reflect the sunbeam to your eye. So disaster, if made placid by your faith, will reflect a heavenly light upon your soul.

Finally, the kingdom of God comes nigh unto you, in the constant and indefinite mercies of God. He is long-suffering. He does not cut down at once the thriftless plants of his vineyard. He is not strict to mark our iniquities. But shall his forbearance through our misappropriation of it, prove to us a curse? Will you sin, that his grace may abound? Will you lengthen the score of your iniquities, trusting that his lenity will, with an unquestioning readiness, finally blot it out?

My hearers, it remains with *yourselves*, whether you will make this encompassing kingdom of love as the brightness of the New Jerusalem or as the terrors of Sodom and Gomorrah!

## SERMON XIV.

### LIFE A VAPOR.

FOR WHAT IS YOUR LIFE? IT IS EVEN A VAPOR, THAT APPEARETH FOR A LITTLE TIME, AND THEN VANISHETH AWAY. — James iv. 14.

THE brevity, the uncertainty of life, was the writer's passing topic. It was in a few words pressed upon his readers' notice, as a rebuke of their worldliness, of their irreverent confidence, of their avarice. In view of this solemn fact, they were counselled to defer more to the will of God, to rejoice less in their presumption, to be piously distrustful.

James, here, by life means, of course, the material, worldly life, — the life of the senses, of the flesh, of time; — the life of merchandise, of physical comfort, of terrestrial schemes, desires, satisfactions, — that life whose *existence* depends upon the beating heart and heaving lungs, and which perishes with every function and possession when the body's pulse ceases.

Well would it be for us, if we could realize this truth, — if, with all that pertains to a corporeal existence, we might associate the consideration of its perishableness. Would that we might all feel, amid

the varied and pleasant, — yes, and for consolation's sake, amid the *painful*, — experiences that are begotten of our fleshly relations, that none of these experiences, that nothing which induces them, is immortal. How healthful, how corrective, would be such a conviction! Will it never truly seize our minds? Shall the "vanishing vapor" always seem to our misinterpreting eye to be the solid adamant?

The great benefit to us of such a conviction as this of which I have spoken would be, that it would almost necessarily force upon us a thoughtfulness as to that *other* life which, as immortal beings, we must possess. Having rightly answered the question, "What is your life?" according to the purpose of the Apostle, we should be ready to consider the same interrogation, as propounded by the whole Gospel of Jesus Christ, and by our unalterable relation to the spiritual world and to God. What is your *life*, — your *true life*? Let this question be the subject of our discourse.

Does your life lie in things around you? Is it made up of your influences of condition and circumstance? Are you nothing but what accident and the elements make you? Is your life a simple terrestrial existence, perpetuated by food, secured by raiment and shelter? Is it a delirium of pleasure, — a sleep of sloth, — a march of habit? No! your life is the aspiration of your being, the energy of your will, the purpose of your soul. Thus God hath decreed it, mysteriously blending dependence upon His providence with absolute *independence* in personal resolve and conduct.

You will sometimes hear lamentations over the force of circumstances, — you will hear the weak and the fallen justify their surrender of the citadel, by pleading the power and vantage-ground of the assailant. Yet who responds to these poor complaints? Who does not feel that they are a miserable refuge? Who believes that the might of external obstacle or seduction ever fettered down the energies of a living purpose? Eve said, “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat”; Adam said, “The woman tempted me, and I did eat.” But was the forbidden fruit tasted through the force of importunity or the weakness of resistance? The more I observe, the more fully I am persuaded of the impotency of circumstances over a determined aim and a resolute will.

A little water, poured into the crevices of granite, freezing and expanding, tears from the precipice the rocky avalanche, and splits the very mountain-side asunder. So with the energy of the will. Shut it in, — hedge it about, — bear it down. What barriers will it not burst through? What bands of embarrassment will it not snap asunder? What weights of oppression may it not fling off?

One of the great interpreters of the human heart rightly read this power, when he put into the mouth of a noble character, a champion of the cross, this sentiment, “Know, minstrel, and put it in song if you list, that Hugo de Lacy, having lost all he carried to Palestine, and all which he left at home, is still lord of his own mind; and adversity can no more shake him, than the breeze which strips the oak of its leaves can tear up the trunk by the roots.”

He that has lived a life of irresolution and inactivity, who listlessly walks in a circle or willingly treads the path of accident, does not know the force which, like the electric charge within the battery, slumbers in his breast. Tell him to put forth his will, — to *do* something, — to *be* something, and he will smile at your enthusiasm, will sigh at his inability. He has never *felt* the thrill of victory over obstacle. But rouse him to the trial. Once inflame his will, and mark what a new life you infuse! You cause him to realize his moral competency, — you set agoing the enginery of his soul, — you stimulate him by his own motion and progress, — you teach him that his will is a substance, and not a shadow, — a reality, and not a fiction.

The record of every day bears testimony to the conquering power of a resolute purpose. Begin the morning with random acts, — have no fixed plan, — go, — do, — here, — there, as impulse may propel. Let your thoughts be desultory, your hours be broken up, and what will your day have been to you? What will have been *that day's life* to you? Freely may you declare that you are the sport of accident. Your will, that should have been vigilant, vigorous, triumphant, has slept; and pigmies have made you a prisoner. No one, that has any remnant of *the man* in him, passes such a day and is not ashamed and pained at his unprofitableness, — at his voluntary surrender of his high prerogatives, — at his faithlessness to himself.

“Such indecision brings its own delay,  
And days are lost, lamenting o'er lost days.”

But if all this be reversed, — if the day's duties be begun in resolution, — if the mind have its purpose, the soul its aim, — if your thinkings and your doings are persevering, continuous, determined, — that day's close will have for you its congratulations. If your aim have been a noble one, though the results of your toil were scarcely perceptible, yet are you more than compensated for these scanty outward returns, by the dignity of conviction with which your toil has been crowned. It is not the *sum total of achievement* that fills the spirit with delight, so much as it is the consciousness of honorable activity of the faculties, and the maintenance of the rightful supremacy of the will.

It would, of course, be folly to deny that there *are* barriers to the power of the will. So far as it may act outwardly, it has its definite sphere, and no counsel is reasonable or profitable that would urge it to overleap natural restrictions.

Thus, it is evident that our condition may fetter the *range* of the faculties, the *direction* of the will. Your path in life may be forced upon your acceptance by what you may denominate the tyranny of your lot. But what, if it be so? The prescribed sphere of your duties is the arena for your conflict, not the antagonist with which you are to contend. Many of the circumstances of your condition you cannot appoint, but you still, in a substantial sense, may control them; you may make them the submissive ministers of your household, though they obtruded themselves within your doors.

The world's record of splendid successes owes its

existence to the iron energy of individual wills. Reputations are but the tracks of light which the resistless enforcement of well-defined purpose has struck out in the moral firmament. Power and renown, the capacity of usefulness, and the securities of happiness, are not dropped upon human brows, like flower-wreaths, from the skies. No! they have been reared from common seed, and out of the soil of God's common providence.

Who has not heard of the "Society of Jesus"? a name that has made liberty tremble, and purity sicken with fear. Who knows not of the past workings of that engine of spiritual despotism, whose central springs were Rome, and whose wheels and bands did their silent, precise, resistless working at the very ends of the earth? That power, compared to which the other widest and most efficient organizations that the world has ever known have been but playing companies of children, was the embodiment of the perpetuation of the *will* of a single man. What was Ignatius Loyola, that a project conceived by him should gird the whole world, — should dictate to the proudest intellects, and control the most rebellious consciences, — that it should catch, as with supernatural sense, the softest whispers of domestic privacy, and record with unerring pen the secret deliberations of cabinets, — that it should be a universal eye and a universal ear, — black as midnight, diffused as space, noiseless as the grave, rapid as lightning, irresistible as death? What, I say, was the wounded soldier of Pampeluna, that he should have achieved a thing so mighty?

The answer is, He was the incarnation of a toiling, suffering, indomitable *purpose*.

How pregnant the history which Michelet gives us of the French weaver, whose mind thirsted for culture, while he could hardly snatch from the toils of his lot sufficient intervals for necessary repose! It was his habit, amid the whirl and vibration of twenty looms, to seize the unoccupied instants that followed the flights of the shuttle; and, appropriating these to study, without neglecting duty, he crept line by line over the opened page before him, garnering in his intellectual harvest grain by grain. It was his *purpose* that thus picked up these little stray threads of opportunity, and wove them into a fabric of golden privilege, — which gathered together, as it were, one by one the cuttings and the trimmings of the book of time, and spread them into pages, on which his life's best history was written.

How is the *power of will* exemplified in the history of George Wilson, — the little ignorant, work-house pauper, picked up in the streets of Hartford, and taught the first rudiments of learning while doing household service! This *was* his position, — what is it now? He is professor in the Royal College of St. Petersburg, — a favorite of the reigning czar, courted by the great, distinguished by prizes awarded by foreign universities and by royal societies. And what is the secret of this high and honored position? Fortune, luck, had little to do with it. It is the legitimate triumph of a steady, upright, and unconquerable purpose.

Again, for the crowning success of a resolute



human will, I point you to the career of a little knot of drunkards, in the city of Baltimore. *Drunkards!* met to drown reason and *paralyze will* in a bar-room. There they sit, as if to shelter each other in shame, as if to make each other's weakness strong! There they are, bloated, trembling, outcasts, — almost too besotted to mark the hours, each one of which may bear their blighted bodies to a dishonored grave, their crushed souls to the bar of judgment. But what is the reversal of the picture? It is the up-starting of their *prostrate wills*, — it is the birth of *purpose* within their souls. It is the power of the perpetually asserted "*I will*," or "*I will not*," — a power on which regeneration and redemption hang, — which the Giver of our lives has bestowed *with* our lives. All glorious exemplification of the mighty capability of God's free child! Who, henceforward, shall say, that man *living* shall be baffled when he sets his *soul* to work?

Perhaps you may demand instances of the power of the will in some other direction beside that of the intellect, or of visible character, or of outward enterprise, — in the direction of spiritual life, specifically. If this direction have not been included in what has been said, it would be easy to point to Christian martyrs, — to ascetics, — to pictists, — to a Polycarp, — to an Augustin, — to a Pascal, — to a St. Bernard, — to a Madame de Guion, and a Thomas à Kempis. But the power of spiritual volition does not make men conspicuous, except before angels, and before God. It does not show out in visible conquests. It is the soul, struggling and triumphing within *her-*

*self*. Its history is private. If I might call in the testimony of the humble multitudes who, while in the "far country," said, "I will arise and go to my father," and who in the power of that resolve *have arisen* and *have gone* to the Father, you would fully feel, that in the spiritual, as in every other department of action and experience, the *will* is the sovereign of the man. Jesus said, "Ye *will not* come unto me, that ye may have life"; by implication asserting, that on their *wills* depended their spiritual rescue.

Poorly do material things illustrate spiritual; but I will suppose myself standing upon the wharf of a seaboard city. Before me floats a mighty ship. Within her is ponderous and complicated machinery. She is divided into manifold compartments, furnished for bodily comfort and repose. In capacious pantries are stored a month's provisions for hundreds of human beings; within her saloons or upon her ample deck are gathered scores of men, women, and children; and in her deep holds are crowded the various productions of soil and labor. But why this congregation and accumulation? the vessel is as motionless as the piers that hem it in; the wind plays around its iron pipes and amid its scanty rigging, but it is as stationary as the hills before your breath.

But as you watch, that prodigious mass, with all that it contains, moves from its moorings, and commences its journey upon the highway of nations. But how or where this motion? "*The ship's fires are kindled,*" and these arouse, as it were, her irresist-

ible *will*, and send her onward triumphant over her own inertia, and the resistance of the element that embraces her. And now the ship rides upon the boundless waste,—the security of the harbor is abandoned, and winds and waves vex and thwart her,—they foam and lash about her prow,—they beat against her sides,—they lift her upon their mad crests,—they plunge her into their terrific abysses. But those patient fires still burn,—that hidden energy still survives. She drifts and tosses, her speed is stayed, but her course, though indirect, is *onward*. She ploughs her way to the foreign port, and lands her freight without loss, and her passengers without detriment.

So, my hearers, is it with your life. The secret of its force, its progress, and its victory, is the kindling of *the fire* within you. To this end circumstances and your own needs bring their quick friction near your hearts. To this end nature spreads out her splendors, that they may converge into the kindling of your faith and adoration. To this end God has sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, that the *Divine* may light up your souls into flame.

Your *motion* depends upon the *fire*. Your *direction* depends upon the aim that sits at the helm. And the solemn question now presents itself,—*What* shall this aim, this purpose, be? In what objects and to what end shall it act? From some, the answer comes, “Accumulation”; from others, “Renown”; from others, “Station”;—from others, again, “The means of pleasure.” So be it then, if this is their will,—if this is their life. Let them

sagaciously apply their resources; let them maintain this purpose with unwavering steadfastness, let the energies of their whole being be engrossingly applied to the desired consummation, and who shall say that their reward will be denied them? Our God doth not vary his ordinations, though man abuse them to his destruction; and he will not render human will impotent, human energies unproductive, though dedicated to ends that dishonor and blight them.

Rational and accountable beings! Children of God! Heirs of eternity! What are your *lives*? What are your purposes? Have you any purpose? or is your mortal existence best likened to a succession of prints upon the sands of the beach, — to the shifting will-o'-the-wisp, a glimmer without heat, now here, now there, resembling the true light of a steady purpose enough only to mislead and harass those who trust to it, and bring disappointment and despondency unto the soul? Or is your purpose, your will, your *life*, of earthly origin and for earthly ends? Is it a toil for fame, or homage, or wealth, or show, or physical comforts, or terrestrial delights? Shall these be the only results of the awful power of the *will*, the only achievement of the immortal natures? Can it be possible that the allotments of life, the teachings of God's visible glory, the course of His providence, the suggestions of experience, the the voice of the Gospel, the example of Jesus, can inspire no other purpose, no other will, no other *life* than this?

My hearers! in your own bosoms is lodged the mysterious, the unutterably solemn capability of

moral, of spiritual decision. Determine, in this matter, aught in the fear of the Lord, and a waiting spirit shall mightily strengthen you. Let your unfledged faith but struggle to fly, and hidden pinions shall unfold themselves to bear you up. Undervalue none of life's sterling virtues; but to temperance, industry, prudence, to honesty, courtesy, truth, add the dedication of your souls to the Lord. Mark out your path, establish your goal; but let that path be of the spirit, that goal a heavenly character.

## S E R M O N X V.

### THE "HOUR" OF TROUBLE NECESSARY.

NOW IS MY SOUL TROUBLED; AND WHAT SHALL I SAY? FATHER, SAVE ME FROM THIS HOUR: BUT FOR THIS CAUSE CAME I UNTO THIS HOUR.—John xii. 27.

WHAT hour was it? "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified," said Jesus. "Verily, verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." It was the approaching hour of pain and humiliation and desertion and death, that cast its shadows upon the Son of Man.

It is not unreasonable to assume that Christ's sufferings were unparalleled by the sufferings of prophet before him or of martyr after him; for he brought a heavenly organization to be acted upon by the tortures of earth; an unstained purity and delicacy of soul into collision with the grossness and wickedness of his times. He brought his supernatural insight into the nature of the human soul, and his clear vision of its destiny into conflict with the blinding passions and besotted sensuality of a people rushing

to their destruction. It seems impossible, under such circumstances, that Jesus should not have experienced tortures, both bodily and mental, in passing through the final crisis of his mission, which we with difficulty conceive. The same natural shrinking which you or I would experience in view of an imminent and agonizing trial Christ experienced; but was it right for him to supplicate deliverance from that trial? It was not self-sought. No alloy of imprudence or unwisdom, much less of selfishness or sin, had invoked his perils. They came as a necessity of his fidelity. They were the indispensable setting of the times around the jewel of his sanctity. They had been pre-entwined, so to speak, with the history of his mission, and with the events of the world. Christ, from the beginning, knew that it must be so. From the hour of his conflict in the desert, he had foreseen this temptation of the Devil, and from the hour of the ministering of angels to his spirit, he had consecrated himself to the over-mastery of such temptation. His work thereafter was *patience*. His cause was the truth. To its sovereignty he must be the sacrifice; therefore he would not pray to escape the hour, for, in defence of his cause, he came to that hour.

It is true, Christ, on his divine side, is "God manifest in the flesh." Looking upon that aspect of his life, we are studying the heavenly Parent. We are instructed as to what our Creator is, in all his relations to us. It is an opening, in fact, of heaven to the earth, this divine side of Christ; yet we are not to forget that he embodies also all experiences and

necessities of man. He goes before us showing *what* it is that is to enter the kingdom of God. The problem of life is solved by him. Its end opening into futurity, — itself merged therein, is pressed upon our view; and this truth, among others, appears conspicuously, — let us not say sadly, — that it is through conflict, and sufferings, and tribulation, and some crucifixion, that has perhaps the pain of death, that we are to enter the kingdom of God.

I say, let not this fact be a sad one to us. The victor, at his goal, crowned amid the plaudits of the spectators, looks back upon his hard training, his fastings, his sweatings and sacrifices, with joy. It was the pain of those early hours that enters into the muscular vigor, fleetness and endurance of this. The angels, from their sphere of wider observation, may see each moment of sorrow, dropped as a seed into the plain of human destiny, to germinate afterward, and bear each its blossom of delight. So let us receive the lesson which the fact to which I have alluded teaches, and let us not say that the teaching is cruel, until we know the recompense, — until we can expound all mysteries and possess all knowledge.

For myself, I think I can see clearly how and why it is that such trying instrumentalities are needed to lift us to God. God, in the highest conception which we form of him, is not of the prosperous fortunes of the earth; not but what his laws are sovereign through all fortunes, not but what his smiles may be reflected and his blessing may be confessed in pure earthly successes and triumphs; but he is a Spirit, aside from the processes and results of practical life,



however much he may be regarded as within such. To one distinctively seeking God, he is a Spirit alone and apart from everything thus tangible and visible. What rare soul is there, rather, what anomalous and fearful being is there, among men, that can learn of and feel God in his highest attributes and relations along a path of unbroken comfort and success? Such knowledge, by such means, is not found; or so rarely as to form an exception that places the general law in bolder relief. Men wordlily prosperous are not, as observation shows us, the clearest seers of God. Communities like the Ephesians, rich and luxurious, become spiritually blind and dead, and given up to the grossness of idolatry. The hope of immortality, like a night-light, fades out in the gairish day of earthly prosperity.

The entirely successful man comes to deify his own energies and his own sagacity. The highest powers are to him the laws of physical cause and effect, — the certainty of results following care, diligence, and shrewdness. He is likely to become a materialist; a practical necessarian, which is not far from being an atheist. The entirely successful man, the man freed from sickness, pain, and sorrows, finds this horizon broad enough for him, and tries to find this heaven happy enough.

The one signal result of such an earthly condition is, that the creature, with a dominant, sensual, or worldly nature, with the inward vision blinded, the soul bewildered by present splendors, finds no need of God. And yet, God, or the sense of God, is as necessary to the human soul as sound to the ear or light to the eye.

It is for this reason that the human lot must be comparatively a lot of ill success, of suffering, of want. Man must be goaded by a sense of incompleteness, of non-requital. He must pluck the bitter berries of disappointment, with the fruits of content, along the hedgerows of his pilgrimage. There must be a death's-head at his feast.

This is all necessary, I say, to make God a reality to the soul, to make the soul "feel after him," and lean upon him as its strength, and embrace him as its comfort. This is all necessary, as the prophecy of a future condition. These wants and sorrows, creating desires, visions, hopes, are the cross lights and shadows thrown across the earthly path from the heavenly city. They are the monitions, thickening as we go, that this is not our rest, that there is beyond the present a better country.

Let us remember, that all these instrumentalities, judging of man by what he is here, seem superfluous, nay, more, mal-adapted, inhuman. But man is not to be so judged. His condition is not to be so viewed. This life, in comparison with the life to be unfolded, is as the embryo to the full-formed creature; is as the grossness of matter to the subtlety of the spirit. We must, therefore, as I have before intimated, seek the solution of the problem of this life in the fact of another and an endless existence. The rudiments of all after-functions are implanted with the original creation of being. Those rudiments must and will give sign of their existence; and as far short should we fall of a fit estimate of man, neglecting these rudiments of his after condition,

judging alone by his developed earthly proportions, as we should fall short of a proper estimate of the plant, judging from the short stalk alone, and neglecting the little bud that is to be unfolded from that stalk into a plume of graceful branches and of shining leaves.

Therefore, Christ revealing to us the necessities and destiny of the human creature, made and tempted like his brethren, led the way through tribulation unto glory. I cannot conceive of a Saviour of man, though he were pure Divinity itself, as doing his work of redemption by a life of earthly splendor and success. The glory of such a life must be the glory of the touching and tender virtues. The exaltation of such a life must be the depths of its disinterested endurance. The power of such a life must be its weakness in all the defences which art or prowess could erect. The crown of such a life must be the radiance of heavenly approval, upon a head that has been bruised by contumely and enveloped in the shadows of all earthly sorrow. How touchingly do the memorials before us proclaim this great truth. They are the double seal of a covenant ratified by the quivering body and the gushing blood of the divine sufferer. Elements infolding the mystery of the power that lay in that life, of the success of that leadership unto glory.

A practical question may now be put, in view of what has been suggested. Are there not many who feel that everything is well with them, that they have found peace of heart, and joy in devout exercises, who have not brought these conditions of spirit to the

great test which Christ has disclosed and illustrated; namely, the test of suffering, of reverses, of embarrassments, of some ill to body, mind, or estate?

To make my meaning clear, I will offer a plain illustration. I will suppose the head of a family to be oppressed with debt. His business yields him an insufficient income. He finds many wants which he must leave unsatisfied. It costs him great care, and contrivance, and economy, to save himself from serious difficulties. He is a man of religious habits, and desires to be a God-fearing man; but he grows discontented and querulous; perhaps, grows niggardly in spirit; perhaps impugns the course of events, utters hard judgments of his successful neighbors, loses the evenness of his temper, and perhaps the line of exact honesty. The thought comes over him that he is losing foothold of the Christian ascent; his heart smites him, that with a fair seeming there is great hollowness within, and many an ejaculation escapes him, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

His outward condition slides gradually into improvement. Income increases. Unsatisfied wants grow fewer. The stream of his fortune finally glides on without eddies, almost without a ripple.

And now, reflecting upon himself, he says, with no insincerity, "I am a better man than I used to be; my temper is more even; I have fewer wicked discontents in my heart; I love my neighbors more; I have a more vivid sense of the mercies of God; my life is more effectually guided than it was wont to be by the Christian rudder";—and then he really thanks God for the blessed change.

Ah! sincere, but mistaken man! You are the same being that you were a few years since, when, with a smitten heart, you besought God to "be merciful to you a sinner." The circumstances around you have alone shifted their positions; your temptations are fewer, your distresses are none; there are no rocks before your prow, and the wind is in your sails. But your departing embarrassments have not borne away with them your frailties and your sinfulness. You need again the Christian test, *tribulation*, to try the purity of your metal, and thus tried, it would show again the dingy spots of your moral alloy. You have not gone through the purgation that is to fit you for heaven. You are good, simply through lack of inducements to become bad. Watch now, in your present comfortable lot; there may still be in it some trifling annoyances. Go manfully into the search; and ask yourself how you stand the test of these. What! is there something of the old frailty left under the prick of these little thorns? Must your moral nature flee away to covert beneath this mere drizzle of resistance? What, then, when the heavy drops of trial come pattering upon your head? What, then, when the very tempest and flood of tribulation beat upon you, and threaten to overwhelm you?

Peace, my hearers,—the peace that is enduring enough to reach heaven,—the peace that is of a quality to be welcomed in heaven,—“the peace that passeth understanding,”—is not the equableness of an undisturbed lot. More like *this* peace is the repose of the gorged animal basking in the sun.

Spiritual peace is not the quiet of a nature that has no foes to challenge it, but it is the rest and content that come after victory, — victory over self. When circumstances crowd tryingly around the man, threatening him with inward turbulence, — loss of patience, discontent, unkindness of heart, — then let him say, These things are as a fire to burn up the chaff that is within me, and present me purer before man and God; and let him then be true to these promptings, and fight down the rising foe, and meekly invoke the great Helper to his side, and he becomes the victor, and has the peace of victory. He has conquered circumstances, not they him. He, his rightful self, his conscience, his diviner functions, have risen to supremacy over the carnal nature, — a nature given to drag onward the mortal chariot in which the spirit sits as lord.

There is nothing human but must pass through fire before it becomes divine. When contentment has passed through the furnace, and is still contentment, it may be sure that it is of heavenly quality. Before, it may have been satisfaction with outward favors or with worldly exemptions; now, it must be a satisfaction in God. Sanctity must pass through the fire, or it may be a sanctity of forms and habits; a sanctity of traditional opinions and traditional observances; a sanctity of discretion, or expediency, or inheritance. But pass it through the fire, and if it live, it becomes a sanctity of the soul. You will then find it praying amidst the sound of curses; keeping the Sabbath where there are no temples; and feeding upon memories of the Bible where the Bible

itself is wanting. You will find it standing alone in righteousness and devotion, when there are no ecclesiastical organizations to lean upon; when there is no moral finger to point in scorn to religious laxity; and when indeed irreverent thinking and latitudinarian practice invite to their evil counsels and evil ways.

This fiery trial, my hearers, is not kindled for you in some remote valley, or on some mountain-top, but at your own hearths and in your own daily walks. In the outset of this discourse, I supposed an impossibility, — a man successful in every direction of desire. There are sufferings of some kind in every path. As with Christ, so to every man there is an hour to which he must come, — an hour of light tribulation compared with Christ's, but heavy enough to try, and test, and discipline, and deliver the soul. This very day many of us have doubtless had such an hour; an hour of some grievance, or some provocation, or some annoyance, or some seduction, or some inward desire, clashing with the sense of what is true, and right, and God-approved. And how have we come to such an hour, and how have we gone through it? Scorched, — shrivelled, — crisped by the flame? or stronger and brighter for it as we sit here; fitter for prayer, for thanksgiving, for communings with the unseen world. Christ's hour came, and he was glorified thereby; and his triumph is to us the spur and the lure which we may not despise; to the end that every hour of trial to *our* souls may bring to us glory and not shame; and, O Holy Saviour! sent by the Father into the world for the

· help of the frail and the deliverance of the trusting, may the lesson of thy fidelity be engraven on our souls! and may the spirit of thy mission be kindled in our hearts; and may we drink of thy cup, nor shrink from thy baptism, that we may enter into thy glory!



## SERMON XVI.

### OFFENCES MUST COME.

WOE UNTO THE WORLD BECAUSE OF OFFENCES! FOR IT MUST NEEDS BE THAT OFFENCES COME; BUT WOE TO THAT MAN BY WHOM THE OFFENCE COMETH! — Matthew xviii. 7.

SUPPOSE either of the two latter clauses of the text, “It must needs be that offences come,” “Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh,” had stood alone, unqualified by the other clause; what would have been the doctrine taught?

Take the first of the two clauses, “It must needs be that offences come.” This declares the certainty, nay, the inevitableness of crime. If it were the only declaration in Scripture in anywise connected with human transgression, what a doctrine of necessity, of fatalism, would it teach. How it would seem coldly to state the inevitable conditions of humanity! to bear testimony to the inherent, ineradicable sin of the world! to point out the unchangeable workings of the stupendous machine, the *moral universe*! to banish the idea of a Providence, and of course to chill the ardor and dim the hope of benevolence in any of its aims toward relief from the various ills of the world!

“*Offences must come.*” Suppose this were the only doctrine taught; what would be public action, or what private effort? Chiefly defence and alleviation. Laws would be enacted to restrain the offender; to limit the consequence of the offence. It would be taken for granted that the sources of evil could *not* be dried up; that the putrid waters *must* flow. Care only would be exerted to keep the stream within channels that should guard its direction, and to disinfect the air into which it throws its poison.

But the idea of personal accountableness would be no part of the philosophy begotten of the statement, “*Offences must come.*” The idea of modifying such a result, by effort acting on the individual heart, through the instrumentalities of blame for wrong, warnings against delinquencies, encouragements toward uprightness, would be faint, if it had any existence at all. And think what exhibitions of tender devotion or of heroic endeavor (founded on a faith that the soul is the voluntary engenderer of offences) would be lost to the world! There have been no such labors, no such sacrifices of tears and of blood, no such expenditures of the treasures of love, as those compelled by interest in the soul of man, as a free, accountable agent.

There are practical teachings of our day, as there have been in times past, which seem to be founded in no slight degree on such an interpretation of the conditions of the moral world as the dissevered clause which we are considering suggests. These opinions say, “*Offences must come.*” And they find the cause of them in mal-adjusted social relations; in

defective laws ; in artificial contrasts of position ; in unjust relations of capital and labor ; in false connections of man with woman ; in the existence of many similar abuses founded on selfishness.

And so far do some of these modern teachers carry their theories, that they in substance say, While society is thus out of joint, the constraints to evil-doing are irresistible. The moral results, though pitiable, are not blameworthy. The individual, the instrument of the offence, is to be avoided, perhaps confined, certainly to be compassionated, but not condemned as guilty. He is a victim, not a criminal.

Some of the modern French writers on Social Ethics, take this view, with more or less qualification. It seems to be a natural view for those who have deeply felt the pressure of *exterior* evils ; especially who have been scourged by social wrongs ; who have dwelt amid the oppressions of a bad government ; the indifference of class toward class ; public rapacity and corruption ; who have seen enough in these outward, material arrangements and operations of the civil and social world to overbear all patience, all purity, all rectitude ; to *compel*, in other words, the development of evil in the trampled individual, — recklessness, wild passion, revenge, craft, etc.

Then, further, and especially with the French school of reformers, the religious sense seems to be weak, moral principles seem to be placed upon a false foundation, to have hardly an absolute existence (independent of man, so to speak, and al-

lied with God), but are diluted into fitnesses; confounded with instinctive affinities; limited by natural desires; made changeable with the caprices of the individual, or the shiftings of external circumstances. The consequence of such a philosophy (and it has been training the hearts of the French people for a hundred years) must be, to look to the *external* for supports or hinderances to "*harmonial*" and "*unitary*" (it would not be styled *virtuous*) action; to look to the *external* as begetting the clashings and interferences of *folly*, it would not be styled the *iniquity of sinful affections*. Nothing would so soon quiet the turbulence of a Parisian pandemonium, as to throw open its doors and win Jesus of Nazareth to cross its threshold. There can be no hope for the French people, in the way of true liberty, until the seeds of the *virtuous* be first sown in their hearts; until religion be unbound and un-ecclesiasticized; until she come down from her pedestal, and out of her stately and unnatural surroundings, and with life-blood in her cheeks, and the fire of love in her eye, and the ministrations of brotherhood in her ready hand, mingles with the multitude, and makes her daily blessing felt to be indispensable; until the French can reverence the past, they can never build for the future; and the past on earth will never find reverence in the heart, until a higher reverence first exists there. This seems to be the difficulty with that strange nation in its attempts at self-improvement; and with many of its writers on social reform. They see in the *external* chiefly the causes of misery, and they spend their endeavors in

modifying the outward; whereas, they need to know that it is the regulated powers, the fixed principles, the living faith of the individual man, that must lie under every successful attempt at beneficial, social, or civil change.

But suppose, now, that the last clause of the text stood alone, "Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh," what doctrine would it teach? The doctrine of harsh judgments, of unrelenting condemnations. Its philosophy would be that of unqualified human responsibility; of wrong-doing in every form as *unextenuated* sin. It would sharpen the edge of every penalty. It would draw tighter the cords of all discipline. It would admit no allowances in estimate of blame, and temper no verdict with lenity. On the guilty affections, the disobedient *will* of the transgressor, would fall the whole weight of condemnation.

And it is not to be denied that there are those whose moral and religious philosophy takes this direction. They are stern overseers, not wise and benignant watchers, of human affairs. They take into very little account the circumstances that surround the heart, and attribute all evils to the deliberate and conscious transgressions of the individual. And especially is this disposition to overlook outward, extenuating circumstances, and hold the offender to his responsibility, aggravated by the theological theory of original sin and of total depravity. Hardest do they bear upon the transgressors who hold this theory. Least interested are such in efforts at social reform. Where they seek the improvement

of society, it is with little care for any modification of the external conditions under which men dwell, but with a direct interest in, and effort in behalf of, the moral and spiritual forces of the creature; therefore they are far less solicitous to remove poverty, or exposure of facilities to intemperance, from the midst of a community, than they are to distribute tracts and bibles, and bring the sinner within the sound of the Gospel. All things, say they, are possible with God. His spirit entering into the heart can alone regenerate it, and avert its own sins and the public evils. They have no faith that this divine Helper can find a surer entrance into the heart through comfortable clothing, and across a well-spread table, and beneath a tight roof, than through rags, and starvation, and exposure. If they would make a law for the benefit of the community, it would be one not to remove or diminish temptations to sin, but to increase the penalty for offence. You would never find these voting to substitute imprisonment for life for the death penalty, but voting to hang a man *twice over*, if convicted; and their theory pushes its effects into the next world. The sinner, with his terrible guilt, stands before the judgment-seat; his sentence is unmitigable, for his iniquities have been intolerable; freely, with no constraint, clearly seeing the right, with the sanctions of eternity before him, with God's everlasting law upon his conscience, he transgressed. He fell in the midst of his Eden, therefore let the flaming sword keep him from the tree of life; therefore let him find his eternal doom.

Need I say that both classes of moral interpreters

of whom I have spoken, rallying each around a single clause of the text, take very incomplete and unjust views of human condition and of human responsibility,—that there can be no equity of judgment which does not embrace both sides of the subject we are considering; which does not blend the teachings of both clauses of the text. Conjoined, they announce the mystery of life. They intimate the compulsions under which man acts, and they declare also the freedom with which he acts. They assert the simple doctrine of his relative and limited responsibility. They weigh in a just balance what he can *not* help with what he *can* help. They show the grounds on which the justice of God holds his steward to the giving of an account, and affirm the the inflexible impartiality and righteousness of his tribunal.

“It must be that offences come.” We are perhaps not aware of the certainty of stated percentages of crime, under certain fixed outward conditions. You are aware that tables of longevity have been calculated, from long and accurate observation, by which it is ascertained with great exactness how many persons out of a thousand or a hundred die within a year. Statistics of almost equal exactness, on data furnished in Flanders or Belgium, are able to predict the amount of public transgression in the year. Understand thoroughly the outward conditions of a given community; everything that pertains to its civil institutions; its religious facilities; its domestic culture; the amount and quality of the education of its youth; its amuse-

ments; the numerical proportion between its male and female members; their trades and callings; the nature of the soil; the climate, and so forth. Know all these conditions accurately, and I have no doubt that the amount of visible, which would indicate the amount of invisible, wickedness, in such a community, might be computed beforehand, and that a company might, with as large a chance of profit, insure a given amount of righteousness, as other companies insure life or property.

Strange this! yet no stranger than the rest of the wonders of creation and Providence. How clearly does such a fact interlock with the ordinations of God. How manifestly does the law which this fact declares take its place among other laws of the universe, all of them showing an overruling purpose, a sovereign will, excluding chance, and demonstrating the impossibility of human volitions contravening divine ends; proving how out of evil God educes good; that there is a divinity that shapes our ends, that the wrath of man even shall praise the Lord.

“Offences must come.” Some of the elements that enter into such a necessity of offence, and to a definite extent limit responsibility, are easily specified. First, country, climate, soil, are beyond the election of the individual. *Geographical conditions* shape the outer and the inner man. The same race of men divided; one portion planted upon the fat soil and amid the hot and humid airs of the South-Asian peninsulas or the Northern Brazils; another portion planted on the granite ledges of New England; a third upon the steppes of Siberia, could hardly retain an identity in moral characteristics.



Again, government and civil institutions are beyond individual election. The same race would inevitably develop into dissimilar qualities under despotic and under republican laws. Thirdly, the manifold disciplinary influences that surround the youth will, in the long run, more or less definitely block out his character, and that, to some extent, despite himself. The pressure of society, the quality of companionships, the supply or want of adequate school instruction, parental example and training, — all these constitute a sort of necessity under which the youth loses his responsibility in a certain measure, and beneath which his will must bow. Then, again, there are hereditary tendencies, stronger or weaker ; there are constitutional limitations and proclivities, which make certain paths impossible and certain proportions of character unattainable.

Now, the extent to which these external shapings and enforcements bear upon the individual should be fully understood and admitted. It is futile to say that the will has power over them ; they are precisely the barriers which Providence has purposely erected around the will. They possess a sort of material inflexibleness ; and where they all operate adversely to the well-being, to the harmonious development, to the free direction of the highest faculties of our nature, there exists in the individual a moral impossibility to become what, under different circumstances, he might become.

But, is the individual thus circumscribed delivered from moral responsibility ? Not so long as he stands this side of moral idiocy or insanity. Is he a ma-

chine, moving only as he is moved? Not so long as he possesses the power of deliberation; not so long as he can waver between two decisions; not so long as he can see the parting of the ways, and know that one is right and the other wrong, one is wise and the other foolish; not so long as the consciousness dwells within him (to which a desire for forgiveness or a sense of blame or a dread of punishment can attach) that he is free to determine upon one or another act, to contend for one or another result. A man is free according to the make of his being and within his appointed range and upon his appointed level; and within that range and upon that level there is no man who has not freedom enough to crowd his life with responsibilities. If he have the one talent, he is accountable for the one, and for no more. If he have the ten, he is accountable for the ten, and no less. There is a definite amount of moral gain, of spiritual discipline, to be acquired under whatever stewardship of the soul.

“It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.”

In looking upon this first clause, in a practical light, and in connection with the after clause, we are not to regard it as declaring a naked necessity or constraint to an evil course. It speaks of a necessity, inferred from the fact, that, what daily is and has been since the world began, will continue to be. The affirmation, that “offences must come,” is a proposition founded upon experience. It is simply the title of what has been noted as a constantly recurring chapter in the world’s history. It is a proph-

ecy of what it is believed *will* be, not an omnipotent decree as to what *shall* be. All that I have said concerning the constraints that hedge around the will, annihilating its freedom, is to be forgotten in estimating the real elements of human offence. So far as the word "woe" may mean sorrow and suffering and confusion and defeat, it would pertain even to involuntary offences, — offences of ignorance or of necessity. But so far as it may be construed to mean the deeper misery of the soul, engendered by voluntary sin, it of course pertains alone to that large circle of actions which lie within the range of human volition.

If I were finally to ask myself what are the practical directions in which the whole text should lead me, I would answer, first, it should lead me so to exert every influence which I possess, and so always to *act*, as to diminish the temptations and constraints under which my fellow-men are urged into evil. If "offences *must* come," I know where to look for the *causes* of such a necessity; and I know that those causes can be greatly modified. I have a power to utter decided convictions; to seek to persuade my fellow-men; to vote for local regulations or for public statutes. I am one of a community; and that community, if it would *consent* in action, could so modify its own external conditions as to reduce immeasurably the offences that must take place within it. I am thus accountable to my fellow-men for the use of this ability to do them good by action or harm by inaction. And I am responsible to God for my exercise of a stewardship which he has made in-

strumental in establishing my relations to himself. I will therefore not be behindhand in the path of reform. I will seek to avoid precipitancy, fanciful and impracticable measures, violent and radical demonstrations. I will aim to take counsel from experience and sobriety; but I will spare no effort to diminish the necessities that call offences into being, and that fill the world with a woe that has more of wretchedness than of guilt.

The second direction in which the text instructs me is, to look well to myself; to look after my own conscience, and to discern my tremendous responsibilities. The woe visited upon the offender by the Saviour is the doom upon *avoidable* sin. It is the spiritual penalties upon the soul that doeth evil. It is the anger of God against the *conscious* transgressor of his laws.

Here, then, within my circle of free action, standing master over my field, self-poised amid the circumstances that surround me, I may elect my possessions and my path. I may shut those inducements out, and I may bring these into nearer view. I may look upon that low range for my promises, or draw them from on high. I may stand still, or go backward, or go forward, in either evil or good. I may resist the Devil, so that he shall flee from me, or I may garnish the inner chambers for the dwelling of his worst spirits. If, therefore, I choose the evil, I am to stand at the bar of God and answer why; and no sin which I commit will be without its woe, here or hereafter.

Brethren, I have spoken as for myself. I have

spread before you my sense of the extent of my own responsibility in the sight of God. What I have detailed for myself, I am justified in applying to each of you. Our common duty now is, — a duty urged by earth and heaven, by every hope and every fear, by all things present and all things that are to come, — to be more faithful to our responsibilities, and more fitly to offer our free service unto God.

## SERMON XVII.

FAREWELL SERMON TO THE HARTFORD SOCIETY.

NOT FOR THAT WE HAVE DOMINION OVER YOUR FAITH, BUT ARE HELPERS OF YOUR JOY: FOR BY FAITH YE STAND.—2 Corinthians i. 24.

THERE are some crises in which one would be glad to live a lifetime, to unite all that he can bestow of effort with all that he has gathered of experience, and cast them with unwonted force into the pressing instant.

Not that there is a special urgency upon me, the speaker, or upon you, the listeners, at this time. I mean in regard to the themes ordinarily the subjects of meditation in the pulpit. I am under no superior obligation to-day to announce with earnestness the demands and sanctions of the Gospel; nor are you, in this hour, under any peculiarly stringent necessity of an application of those demands and sanctions to yourselves. We are *never* out of such necessity. The current of our sinful tendencies needs to be broken every day, every hour, against the blessed impediments which a gracious Creator casts athwart the stream.

Yet still, if I might, I would crowd into the occa-

sion now vouchsafed whatever of conviction, of desire, of interest, of hope, may have wisely stirred my heart since I first accepted the office of your Christian counsellor. I would pray, that whatever beams of light God has permitted to struggle through the mists of frailty that have shrouded this place of speech might converge into a focus, not without some glow. Do not mistake my desire. I do not mean the dazzle of rhetoric, but the fervor of simple and direct earnestness.

For, my brethren, — for what purpose have we held each other's hands so long? Why have we come hither, — I to my place here, you to your places there? Not for the interest of curiosity, — not for the perishable stimulus of the intellect, — not in the spirit and hopes of a worldly confederation, — not with aims toward no higher than outward strength and show; — but this sanctuary has won our feet as to the courts of preparation for the immortal service. Here the heart has, by just theory, had but one question to ask, and has sought, as from the very Author of faith, the sufficient answer. The question has been, “What shall I do to be saved”; the answer, if true to the New Testament, has been, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Faith, — some sort of faith, better than common, than of every day, — has brought us here. Faith in the *forms* of virtue and of sanctity, — faith in some distinct endeavors after religious ends, — faith in needs and usages not wholly secular, — faith, that there is a better way of peace and happiness than we discover for ourselves, or our friends for us, — faith in

futurity, — vague, shifting, inoperative in the main, but better than a dead faithlessness to everything that is not within measure of the foot-pace or the hand-span. Faith, that sin is the darkness over heaven, — that it is the curse of the soul, — that God has offered us help to be delivered from it, — that Jesus is that sent help, — that here the hands may reach higher for it than elsewhere, — and here the soul cry louder for it than elsewhere. Some sort of a faith of this quality, and looking in these directions, has brought us hither from time to time. And this faith, in its lowest forms, is better than no faith; for it is the mark of the man over the brute, — it has in it the mysterious ring of immortality, and therefore, if this were the last word that I should utter to you, it would be (if I could make it such) a word that should seize these threads of faith, — some floating gossamer-like in upper air, — some stretching out heavily on the level, and some dragging in the dust, — and bear them all, within the dove-beak of love, to the hand of Him who, by them, should draw their possessors to himself.

“*By faith ye stand.*” Ye, the whole being, stand; just as mind stands by intelligence, just as body stands by temperance and health, just as conscience stands by integrity. A man without faith is as an idiot in the department of the understanding, or as a paralytic in the department of muscles. A soul! what is this without faith? What is a sun without radiance? What is music without sound? What is *any* substance without its chief property? or any organ without its specific function? Think of this,



my hearers, *a soul without faith!* an entity sprung from God, yet knowing only the *name* God, through the same perceptions that buy a loaf, or build a house, or count coin!

Some one has a beautiful allusion to the shell, which, in the heart of the desert keeps up its tiny roar, as if it had an undying yearning for the surges from which it borrowed its diapason. Hold the ear down to the *soul* without faith, and do you imagine you would hear from its depths the faintest resonance, as from some divine birthplace? a murmuring, as of an inextinguishable desire after that other endless home? Alas, no!

“By faith ye *stand*.” This is a strong word, *stand*. Intellect can do much. Practical sense can take many buffets. Indifference can *seem* to make light of many hard pressures. There is a shrewd way of fighting off troubles, or a dogged way of bearing them; but after all, faith is the only power that can “*stand*” under burdens, or be firm before the floods.

Note who reels, who totters, who stumbles, who falls, in the world. It is *not* he who abounds in faith. Fortune may fail, snares entrap, foolishness counsel; but disaster or entanglement or unwisdom is not prostration. He who has faith, touches bottom, and is erect, come what may. Show me the person *without faith* (and by faith I mean belief in God and spiritual verities, — in the sanctions and compensations of truth, — in the disclosures and life of Jesus Christ, as the outshowing of the Deity), — show me one without faith in these things *standing*, when sor-

row bursts its waterspouts over the head, — when disasters roll on, a full tide, — when any of the deep, serious ills of life encircle and submerge the soul.

To a faith like this, my hearers, I have tried to lead you; yet not, in the Apostle's words, as "by dominion." Any so-styled faith, that is not voluntary, is misnamed. Anything acceded to because prescribed, is not faith. You can no more produce faith from dictation, than you can force the twig to spring from the trunk, or the bud from the twig, with a punch and mallet.

You bring here a certain mystery of life, having its sovereign force and its inflexible processes. It can only assimilate, and this only by its native predilection, not by exterior stringency. I have felt this, and my purpose has been to *win* you, if possible, to faith, your understandings by arguments, your hearts by persuasion.

So, I have aimed to be a "helper of your joy," — for a true cordial *faith* is the most joyous of all possessions; as precious and satisfying as a *forced, unsound* faith is vexatious and torturing. Is not a sense of the *security* of which I have spoken in itself above all price? Is it not blessedness to say, "I *know* in whom I have believed," and to feel that we also "are known of Him in whom we have believed."

You do not, I trust, forget what this pulpit has taught *for faith*, both with regard to doctrines (so called) and to the principles of practical Christianity; yet it will not be unwise at this time to pass under rapid and condensed review some of the instructions in each direction.

You have been taught, then, first, to look to God, as the inexhaustible fountain of grace, — as the holy, just, yet loving One. And you have been urged to recognize Him, in the spirit of the pronoun *Him*, — the Intelligence, — the Will, — the Sovereign Agent, — the Infinite Person, — the Reader of thoughts, — the Hearer of prayers, — the Bestower of bounties, — the Father. Not *it*, — the great abstraction, — the vague embodiment, — the vast, mysterious impersonality. You have been warned against this reef, along the shallows of a profane philosophy, on which every wreck has shown its name upon the stern, “*Atheism.*”

Next, yet rather parallel with the first truth, you have been pointed to Christ as revealing the Father, as furnishing evidence that a force, that could for a specific end display itself in attributes analogous to those which pertain to man, must itself be a force analogous also to the human will. You have been taught the Divinity of Christ, — strictly his Divinity ; that is to say, the phase of God in him, — the out-showing of a certain mystery, whereby a being in the form of man holds out powers and qualities that measure, to the uttermost stretch of *our* faculties, the Heavenly Parent.

You can afford to bear the *slur* of receiving Christ as “a mere man,” though candid opponents *cannot* afford to make such imputations. Not that I think any person who *does*, through candid inquiry, and in a meek spirit, believe Jesus to have been a mere man, is a fit subject for a slur from other religionists ; but you, I trust, are far enough from that line of be-

lief to look with considerable indifference upon charges which violently insist, that you do come squarely up to the full heretical mark. For my own part, I am content to enjoy my own thoughts, when I hear of some commentator on Unitarianism affirming that it is essential to this form of doctrine, that it deny the Divinity of Christ.

I have set this Being before you as the living centre of light for your opinions on all matters of ethical and spiritual import, — as the object around whom all our anxieties, our hopes, our affections cluster, — as the Revealer of our destiny here and for ever, — as the only middle instrumentality between the plains of earth, and the heights of heaven; — in a word, as the witness to, and the virtual presence of, Him who is on high.

This is an age of reckless speculation as well as of bold inquiry. I might almost say, it is an age of assumptions of the Christ. New revelations are pretended, the heavens are affirmed to open, an almost visible contact of the supernal and the terrestrial spheres is declared. I will not seek to give too great weight to the testimony of ill-defined phenomena; but, on the contrary, I would not entirely ignore them; yet this I have urged upon you, and still urge, — that Christ is the only messenger who has come to us from the bosom of the Father, — the specially, supernaturally accredited Revealer of the Eternal Power and Godhead, — the Infinite Love and Mercy. Whatever *other* truth is taught will marshal itself into its fit place under the leadings of Gospel principles. Whatever propositions *incon-*

*sistent* with the Gospel are urged, must be maintained only by the demolition of the structure which eighteen centuries have reared on the foundation of historic evidence, of internal fitness, of a contented and blessed experience, of a widening dominion, of a record of vast and multifold beneficence. Amid these meteors that glare along the horizon,—flashing out their deceptions almost too transiently to awaken any other sentiment than passing wonder,—I turn to the *steadfast Star*, — the culminating, the serene “*light of the world.*” I see the Lord from heaven; from his lips issuing all the words of life; his hand holding the everlasting scroll; his eye beaming a love that swallows up all the philanthropies of the world; and I indicate him to *you* as the fixed point of support for your souls. *Can* you reach a crisis in life through which he cannot guide you? *Can* you dutifully assume a burden which he cannot fully help you to bear? *Can* you go down the steep acclivities needing any other companion, or across the dark valley needing any other guide, or before the questionings of the Judgment Seat, and need a more merciful or a juster Judge? Do not say so until you have made experiment of the power of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have made prominent to your minds the doctrine of an ever-present, helping Spirit. In view of our perishing resolutions, of our sinking frailties, of our inclinations to sin, I have held up the Divine Power as the only supplement. This teaching alone puts the heart of life into prayer; believing it, you are never deserted in the world. *Without* this belief,

whatever we may seek, we are sadly near the borders of a theoretical Atheism.

I have thus far specified three points on which this pulpit has sought to be explicit and urgent, — points embraced in the Baptismal formula, — “in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

The dread doctrine of retribution for sin has also found utterance here. It is the simple doctrine, founded on the law of growth and progress; on the law of continuity of being; on the law of personal identity; on the law of connection between past, present, and future; on the law of experience, and of consciousness. A doctrine not created by Jesus of Nazareth, but more distinctly set forth and illustrated by him; a doctrine which even brutes recognize on the ground-level of their faculties; which the vegetable world obeys; which no organism can evade. But oh! the harvest of *sin*, in the moral and spiritual creature! My hearers, I have spoken too coldly on this point! God forgive me, if I have painted in neutral tints what should have been flashed out in hues of fire! but if my past words have been weak, let my present convictions atone; and let me utter warnings that will not perish with the breath that vents them; warnings that enfold the truth, that “the wages of sin is death,” and that man must render an account of his stewardship; that he who believeth not in the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him; that it is better to enter *all maimed by self-denial* into life, than to carry the indulged soul, whole, into the hell of a just retribution.

For our exposures under this terrible law; for our

woes in view of an aroused consciousness of sin, Jesus is the Deliverer, the Atoner, the Reconciler.

I do not present this epitome of past counsels from this pulpit, because I suppose that here, alone, you are fed with fitting spiritual food ; that the doctrines which have been specified are, in any eminent sense, inculcated here. It is my privilege to believe that there is not a pulpit in this city, no one in the land, occupied by a true, practical disciple, in which saving doctrines are not preached. So that I cannot utter the opinion, that this church, or any single church among others, is positively essential as a dispenser of absolute Christian truths. All denominations dispense such truths. Salvation is a power hid in any utterance that has been drawn from the depths of the New Testament, out of a heart of genuine experience. I hold myself to stand on the same platform of *substance* with my brethren of all sections of the Christian Church. Would to God that they could with all sincerity so esteem of me!

But, having said this, I shall utter but half my conviction, if I leave you to suppose that I am indifferent to the *peculiar* views, for the dissemination of which this edifice was reared ; or to certain specific inculcations, probably *never* heard in any other pulpit around us, or, if in any, in very, *very* few.

I refer to the Protestant doctrine of *Liberty* ; to the Apostolic doctrine of "let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind" and be "able to give a *reason* for the hope that is in him." For this, I rejoice to have stood here for a season, and I rejoice at the thought that, for many years to come, the

right of private judgment will be vindicated from this spot.

How beautiful is nature around us! How catholic are her bounties! those rounded hills; that flowing stream; these waving trees; this sun by day; the stars by night, — these are not fenced in from common participation. And the beauties of architectural forms; the roll of diapasons; the concords of the wide-mouthed bell, — these, the embodiments of subtle laws of material nature, make their universal appeal, and receive a universal response. And then, this *Book*; this unlimited comforter; this friend of every heart; this teacher of every family; bound in covers, but unbound in its spirit; how like the blue vault is it, in its magic amplitude, enfolding the entire world!

And now shall a petty man thrust himself up amid these universal appeals, and utter his little egotism? Or shall a body or band of frailties just like himself, make him the mouthpiece of the corporate dogmatism? “The companionship of these my soul hateth; Lord, let me not come into their counsels.”

Yes, I claim for this pulpit, that it has not been draped in illiberalities. Whatever infirmity of temper or heat of occasional discussion may have let unfortunately slip, at which a just sensitiveness may have taken offence, this will be pardoned to its source; but the theory, and the deliberation of this pulpit have been toward spiritual emancipation; toward entire liberty of conscience. And this community yet *needs* this vindication of private rights.



It is in a corner ; public opinion drives it into narrow quarters ; but all the greater necessity that it should live, and toil, and endure.

My friends, who have so long listened to counsels here, if by any chance it should be your lot, in this or any other place, to mingle in services around *creed-imprinted altars*, I cannot refrain from saying, Do this in meekness of heart for all the good that may be administered, but do it not with any other than firm-set minds against the *un-charities* of a narrow theology. If it did not savor of the very assumptions of priesthood, of the very spirit of domination against which I contend, I would say, cleave to your own altar, cost what it may. Throw in some little sacrifice for the truth, as you believe it to be in Jesus ; do your part, not only to convert yourselves, but to instruct the world.

I am happy to believe that something has been done in this direction since this house was dedicated. Concurring circumstances have introduced some little *alleviation* into the theological odium, — the sectarian rancor of the place and time. May the good influences begun be continued and expanded, until it shall come to be suspected that there *is truth* at the bottom of every pellucid well, whose feeders are the rills of the New Testament ; that there is room within the circle of every creed for charity, — toleration, — nay, neither of those is the word, — for *justice*, to believers of whatever form of doctrine.

There are encouraging signs that the days of ecclesiastical tyranny are passing away ; there is *light* on the wrinkles of the aged beldame, and she

will retire from a very sense of ugliness into the holes of the earth. The purple flood of the morning is breaking over the east; those upon the mountains, looking afar, believe that they see the day. Your instrumentality is indeed slender in the general contribution of liberal forces, but it has its worth. Your channel, though no wider than a thread, will still push its rapid way, with and beyond the advancing flood; and though the general onward swell of waters will render your motion less marked, there will be for you, none the less, a triumph for the great end.

You have gained something within six and a half years. It is no inconsiderable acquisition for a religious society to have obtained unembarrassed possession of all the external aids to worship. Seven and a half years ago, your advertisement in one of the public prints, for a religious meeting, was parodied in a subsequent issue of the same journal. It is too late in the day for another such small display of intolerance as this.

I would not drop for you one word of inflated encouragement; but I say to you, you have no reason to take a glomy look at your condition. It is not to be disguised that you need, as you have needed, patience, fortitude, and steadfastness; but it would be gratuitous solicitude to apprehend that with these, and a usual fortune in other things, you are not to succeed. God in his providence may hold enfolded within the event that vacates this pulpit an indisputable favor to you, whose fruits will speedily be your blessing. May it so prove; do not anticipate that it will not so prove.

Yet, turning from the external to the inward, it is here that real joy will make discoveries, if at all. It is a question for financial interest to ask, whether the *pecuniary* concerns of a religious corporation are flourishing. It is a question for sectarian sympathy to ask, whether the numbers within a special society are multiplying. But it is the question of spiritual solicitude to put, — whether *souls* have been touched, redeemed, saved, in an administration of six years. Not that it would not be a source of consolation to think that errors of opinion had been rectified; that prejudices had been dissolved; that morals had been promoted; that the indefinite well-being of the individual and of society had been advanced; but the *question of questions is*, Have souls been edified? that is, built up in the Gospel.

This question I cannot answer, except in the *hope* which God permits me to entertain; but I *will* reply, that unless something of this has been the result of my ministrations, they have been essentially unblest. If, my hearers, not one of you has a testimony in my behalf, in the presence of our common Master, then have I failed of my stewardship here. But if your consciousness accord me that testimony, — yes, if *one* soul have found through me nearer audience of God, then blessed be his mercy! I will not veil my heart in utter shame; for a soul, — a creature capable of immortal benedictions, — what reward higher than to have won the good witness of such before God!

I cannot part from you as a society, without expressing my entire satisfaction with your prompt fulfilment of the obligations which you assumed at

my settlement, and for your unvarying courtesy and kindness of judgment. In faith, you have done much. May your faith be still equal to more!

Our ways henceforth part. If some doubt and some anxieties hover over your prospects, mine are by no means exempt from uncertainties and from solicitude. We each need the guidance of a higher power, and the support of a heavenly arm; but those divergent ways, through whatever vicissitudes and experiences they lead in after days *here*, may they finally meet at the Celestial Gate.

Brethren, sisters, friends; my elders on whose good counsels I have leaned; men of my own years, with whom I have largely sympathized; young men, whose ways I have watched with interest, and whose welfare I have sought to cherish; children, dear to us all, our living hopes, our unceasing care, — *Farewell!*

APPENDIX.



## A P P E N D I X .

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THE following additional notice we extract from the *Alta Californian* :—

“ At the earnest solicitation of the committee of Boston clergymen to whom the Unitarians of San Francisco had assigned the selection of their Pastor, Mr. Harrington came amongst us, some two months since, and immediately entered upon the duties of his sacred office. How well he has satisfied the hopes and anticipation of all, how acceptably he has walked among us, is sufficiently evident from the sorrow manifested among all classes and denominations of our city. He was emphatically the man for the position to which he was called. He was inspired with the spirit of the age and the country ; he felt deeply that this congress of the nations and races of men must exert a mighty influence in the great scheme of universal enlightenment ; he recognized to its fullest extent the responsibility of his post as a sentinel upon this watchtower of republicanism and Christianity ; he accepted cheerfully all its labors and its cares. A scholar in the fullest sense of the word, and unusually gifted with biblical and classical learning, he had a yet more important knowledge, — the knowledge of the human heart, and of the hidden springs of action which move men in actual every-day life. Of distinguished talents, devoted to his holy calling, and filled with the spirit of his

Master, he had, moreover, a warm, earnest interest in all the great moral, educational, and benevolent movements of the day.

“Thus, while he was versed in all the learning of the schools, he was able, unlike too many of his profession, to approach the heart of every man with the sympathy and encouragement which he needed; he understood how to make his discourse practically effective upon the life. He was peculiarly impressed with the importance of individual man, apart from all creeds, or association, and with the necessity of individual effort and piety. In the sacred desk he was deeply impressive and forcible, his discourses satisfied the minds of the most intellectual, and touched the hearts of all hearers.

“Such is the pastor, and such the citizen whose loss we are called upon to mourn. Cut off in the very commencement of his labors, denied the fulfilment of his hopes and anticipations of usefulness, he has left behind him a memory which will long be cherished in the hearts of all who know him. Calmly and peacefully, in the full possession of his mental faculties, he met his death, and beautifully illustrated in that last moment the warmth of his earthly affection, and his deep and devoted trust in the God whom he had served, — a fitting close to his earthly teachings, — a fitting end to such a life.

“The sorrow at this affliction is peculiarly heartfelt and universal. Far away from home, and among comparative strangers, the wife and daughter of the deceased are left alone and in sorrow. The large religious society just springing up under his auspices is without a head. The city has lost a citizen whose influence for good would have been wide-spread and most distinctly marked.”













